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AN ACCOUNT OF THE BATTLE OF LIAO-YANG

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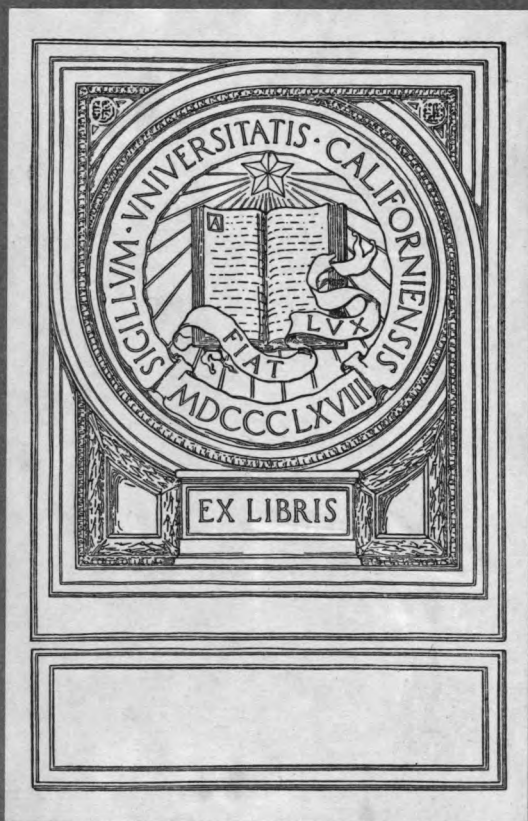
**Questions and 10 Maps
for Examination Purposes**

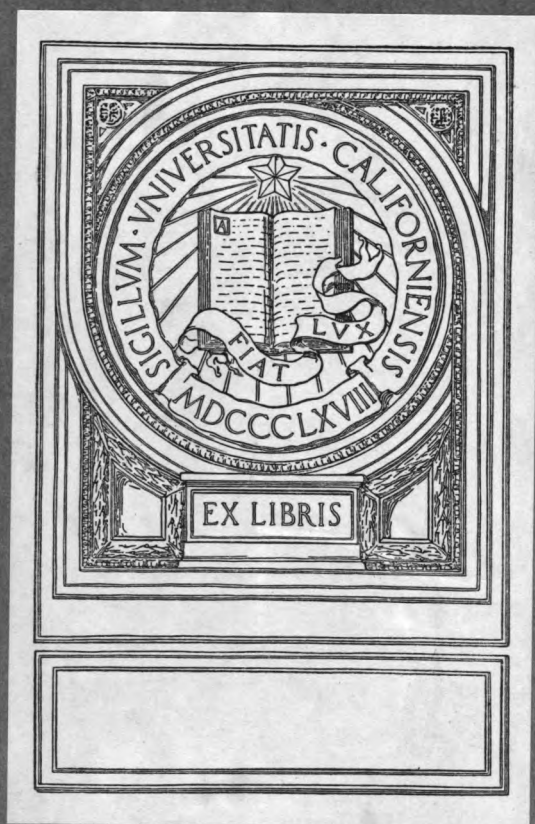
By

Major-General Sir W. D. BIRD,
K.B.E., C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.

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AN ACCOUNT OF THE
BATTLE OF LIAO-YANG

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AN ACCOUNT
OF THE
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WITH
*Questions and 10 Maps for
Examination Purposes*

By
MAJOR-GENERAL SIR W. D. BIRD
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PREFACE

THE point of view and actions of the Russian Army are first dealt with and explained in this account, and then those of the Japanese forces. The reader, therefore, can to some extent see the various problems in the aspect in which they appeared to the commanders who had to solve them.

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AN ACCOUNT

OF THE

BATTLE OF LIAO-YANG, 1904.

(Based on the British Official History of the War, the Reports of the Military Attachés, A Staff Officer's Scrap-book during the Russo-Japanese War, and information obtained from the Japanese General Staff, during a visit to the battlefield.)

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CHAPTER I.

SUMMARY OF EARLIER OPERATIONS

THE plan of campaign that was followed in 1904 by General Kuropatkin, the commander of the Russian army which was serving in Manchuria, was based on the principle that the offensive should not be undertaken by the Russians until the strength of the forces that had been carried from Siberia and Europe to the theatre of war, and their organization and equipment, was such that victory would be assured. Meanwhile, the Russian troops that had reached the front were to fight "delaying and guerilla actions," and "no position or point should be considered of sufficient importance to justify a reverse to the formations that were occupying it."

Since, at the outbreak of hostilities, there were not more than 75,000 Russian soldiers in Manchuria and the Ussuri Province, some such policy must have been adopted by the Russians, if the control of movement over the seas in the Far East was gained by their enemies; for they calculated that the strength of the active and territorial armies of the Japanese, together with that of troops that would be available as drafts to maintain their establishment, amounted to 400,000; and it was

supposed that ten or eleven divisions,* each of about 19,000 men, including those of the administrative services, could in the first instance take the field. In practice, however, the consequences of General Kuropatkin's plan were unfortunate; for, in the numerous engagements that were fought during the first five months of the struggle, the Russians on nearly every occasion broke off the battle before a decision had been reached, but often after the enemy's first attacks had been repulsed; and both leaders and men, therefore, learnt the bad lesson of subordinating their wills and actions to those of the Japanese.

In the course, then, of the strategical operations that were initiated by the landing in Korea of a detachment of Japanese in February, 1904, and subsequently expanded into a converging movement by three Japanese armies in the direction of Liao-Yang, while another army laid siege to Port Arthur, a series of actions took place at the end of July. And the Russians, after fighting hard, but on the whole not unsuccessfully, during the hours of daylight, fell back in each case at nightfall; and withdrawing from close contact with the enemy halted in entrenchments on the hills in the vicinity of An-shan-chan, Lang-tzu-shan, and An-ping. (Map I.)

* Actually eleven divisions, a cavalry brigade, about six Kobi brigades, and some regiments of artillery were sent to Manchuria by the Japanese up to the end of August, 1904.

CHAPTER II.

OPERATIONS OF THE RUSSIANS

THE RUSSIAN PROBLEM IN AUGUST, 1904, AND THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE BATTLE

The Russian Army, in the opinion of General Kuropatkin, was still at this period inferior to that of the Japanese, not only in numbers, but in all the qualities and characteristics that make for efficiency; for it was estimated—over-estimated as it happens—that Marshal Oyama, the Commander-in-Chief of the enemy's troops, could dispose of about 150,000 infantry, 4,500 cavalry, and 500 guns, or an aggregate of 165,000 fighting men. General Kuropatkin, therefore, was naturally in doubt whether to accept battle when next the enemy advanced, or to abandon large magazines of stores that had been formed at Liao-Yang, and to retire, as some of his subordinates desired, to the northern bank of the great river Tai-tzu.

On August 10th the Russian Eastern Squadron, which early in the war had been driven by the Japanese Navy into the harbour of Port Arthur, made a last, despairing sally from the place, as the warships were being hit by the unaimed fire of the siege artillery of the Third Japanese Army; but the majority of the vessels were driven again into the harbour by the enemy's fleet. This defeat was followed by such alarming reports as to the defensibility of the fortress, that the Russian Viceroy in the Far East, Admiral Alexiev, who was also Commander-in-Chief of the Russian forces both in Manchuria and the Ussuri Province, made strong representations to Kuropatkin that an effort should be made to assist the garrison; and he suggested that a force should at least demonstrate against General Oku's Second Japanese Army, which was standing near Hai-cheng, and was said to have been weakened by the detachment of troops, or, according to some reports, of the bulk of the group, to the Third Japanese Army at Port Arthur. General Bilderling,

who had been temporarily placed in command of the Russian Corps that were facing eastwards, pointed, on the other hand, to the precarious situation of these formations ; as behind them was the Tang, a river, or rather mountain stream, liable to become unfordable owing to sudden floods, and here spanned only by a few bridges.

A commander who has no confidence in the efficiency of his army is not likely to undertake even a limited offensive, and in any circumstances a half-measure of this kind would probably result in harm rather than good. The proposal, therefore, was not adopted. Rain, the teeming rain of the rainy season, had now begun to fall in torrents, which tied both armies to their ground ; and whether the Russians should accept battle when the weather cleared and the enemy came on, or whether they should again avoid it, must have been a distressing question, since good reasons could be given in favour of each alternative.

In the first place, an army that may soon receive a large accession of numbers, should evidently avoid decisive action pending their arrival. For, as is stated in the Field Service Regulations, the "concentration of superior force, moral and material, and its ruthless employment in the battle, are essential for the achievement of success." The V Siberian Corps* was now nearing the front, two other corps were expected, the I European, which was approaching Harbin, and the VI Siberian. The arrival of the first of these formations would raise the fighting strength of the Russian Army to about 155,000, and each of the others possessed about 30,000 fighting men. General Kuropatkin, therefore, might reasonably decide to fall back behind the Tai-tzu, which was in flood, and between 100 and 300 yards in width. The Russians might then either be able to gain sufficient time to allow of the arrival of the reinforcements, since to cross a broad river in face of the enemy is generally a slow and difficult matter. Or, if the

* A Corps consisted of two infantry divisions, each of twelve or sixteen battalions, together with corps engineers, administrative services, and a division or smaller force of cavalry ; and the number of field guns varied from 64 to 124.

Japanese succeeded in forcing the passage of the Tai-tzu before these corps had reached the front, the Russians could still continue to give way to the pressure of the invaders, who eventually would be obliged both to face superior numbers and to fight with one or more big rivers behind their armies.

On the other hand it could, and not without justice, be pointed out that to retire would involve the abandonment of all the magazines that had laboriously been accumulated at Liao-Yang. Also that it was now widely known that this had been indicated as the place where the Russians would first check and then throw back the enemy. But, even so, a voluntary would be less disadvantageous than a compulsory abandonment of the city. More serious was the argument that if the Russians withdrew behind the Tai-tzu without retaining, by means of bridges that were protected by entrenchments, the power of repassing it, the initiative would fall to the Japanese. The latter might then halt securely behind the river while forces were sent southwards so as to make sure of quickly taking Port Arthur; and when this had been effected the enemy would receive an accession of numbers amounting perhaps to 50,000 men, in addition to the gain of all the prestige of having captured this famous fortress. A bridgehead had been constructed round the large Chinese city of Liao-Yang for the protection of a number of bridges that had been made near it; but the area enclosed by these works was not extensive enough to enable a force to manœuvre freely within it, that would be sufficiently large to be sure of breaking through any lines of investment that might be built by the Japanese.

The preservation of the Russian Army, however, was without doubt the most important of the many conflicting interests of the Russians; and, whatever the disadvantages, a retirement must be made to the northern bank of the Tai-tzu, if the army could not be saved from disastrous defeat by any other means. The ruling factor, therefore, was whether there would be a chance of victory in a great battle that would be fought out in the area to the south of the river, and before the arrival of the I Corps and VI Siberian Corps.

It is stated in the Field Service Regulations that :—
“ If a commander is able to occupy a strong position which cannot be turned, or can only be turned by a wide movement through difficult country, the delaying power of the force is very great.” And if the delaying power is great the enemy may be induced to afford the defender an opportunity of taking the offensive, either because at first a greater proportion of force was expended in attacking the position, or because dangerous manœuvres were undertaken for the purpose of avoiding it. In addition to the bridgehead the Russians were entrenching a position half a dozen miles to the south of Liao-Yang, the left of which rested on the river, the right on a commanding hill. They would, in consequence, soon possess a position, chosen and fortified, that could be used to compensate for the inferiority in the quality of the Russian troops. And the position would be “strategically important,” being so situated that the Japanese, whose armies could not for long be maintained when at a distance from Ying-Kow and the railway, could not make a wide circle round it. They would, therefore, be obliged either to deliver a direct attack on the position ; to divide their army into two groups, one of which would endeavour to hold the defenders to their ground, while the other crossed the Tai-tzu, when the Russians, whose numerous bridges would enable troops more quickly to be passed over the river, could concentrate force against one of the enemy’s groups ; or if the Japanese attempted to pass the whole of their army over the Tai-tzu in the neighbourhood of Liao-Yang, without engaging the troops in the entrenchments, the Russians could probably advance with superior numbers against either front or rear of the enemy’s army when it was undertaking the slow business of moving over the wide stream. Owing to the positions of the Japanese armies, and to the fact that it would be impolitic to enter Chinese territory (the boundary of China proper was not far from the right bank of the Liao River) it was unlikely that they would move into the area lying to the west of the lower course of the Tai-tzu.

It is also stated in the Field Service Regulations that, when circumstances permit, the temporary occupation

of a covering position in advance of the main position may be advisable. The presence of troops in the covering position will, the Regulations point out, perhaps mislead the enemy as to the real nature of the defensive arrangements and cause them to deploy prematurely or in a false direction. The positions at An-shan-chan, Lang-tzu-shan, and An-ping might perhaps be used as covering positions to the lines round Liao-Yang. But, as the Field Service Regulations warn us, other aspects of the matter must, as in all human undertakings, be considered ; for losses and confusion may occur when the advanced positions are abandoned, and there are moral disadvantages in turning, even temporarily, the backs of troops to the enemy.

Human action is the result of the influence of a multiplicity of motives, and it is never possible to say definitely that even a group of them was instrumental in causing a decision to be taken. Perhaps, however, some such thoughts as those that have been mentioned above were among the things that crowded through the minds of General Kuropatkin and his staff. And it may be supposed that these, and also other factors, such as the advent of the rainy season, which would certainly delay the movements of the Japanese, and the political unrest in Russia, were passed in review by General Kuropatkin. At any rate, he resolved that, for the moment, the Russians should stand fast, but that a battle should be fought in the positions round Liao-Yang.

The commanders of corps were directed, therefore, to cause reconnaissances to be made, and constantly to harass the enemy. When attacked the Russian troops were to withdraw to the lines at Liao-Yang, and measures were to be taken to ensure that this should be effected in good order.

The Russians consequently held their ground, occupying a frontage of some fifty miles with about 120,000 fighting men, who were divided into two groups between which there was an interval of fifteen or twenty miles of steep-sided hill and rugged valley. The Southern Group of 60,000 fighting men, with about 134 guns and 16 machine guns, consisted of the I Siberian Corps, part

of the II Siberian Corps including the 5th East Siberian Rifle Division, and the IV Siberian Corps, together with detachments of cavalry and the other arms which covered the front and kept in touch with the Japanese; the Eastern Group of the same strength, but with about 234 guns, included the III Siberian Corps, the X European Corps, and half of the XVII European Corps. The course of the Tai-tzu was guarded by strong forces of cavalry for a distance of at least twenty-five miles above Pen-hsi-hu, there was a detachment of the three arms, under a General Liubavin, at this place, and another on the bank of the Liao River at a point about thirty-five miles to the west of Liao-Yang; and the reserves, some 20,000 to 30,000 strong, consisting of half of the XVII Corps and portions of the V Siberian Corps*, were employed in making or improving the defences round Liao-Yang.

It is well known that an effort of will is necessary for the arousing of a thought, but when the thought has become familiar the effort is made unconsciously, as the mind is then accustomed to the contemplation of these particular circumstances. If, then, men who have been in the habit of thinking on certain lines are suddenly required to bend their thoughts into a different channel, not only is all the previous mental preparation wasted, but a feeling of shock, of surprise, may even hamper the will in carrying out its function of evoking a new thought. And this is why experience teaches that changes of plan worry and upset troops.

Nevertheless, on August 23rd, General Kuropatkin suddenly resolved completely to change his plan. And among the reasons which combined to cause him, a man of great ability and of wide knowledge, to do so, may have been the fact that the remainder of the V Siberian Corps had reached Mukden, and news had come in that part of the I European Corps had arrived at Harbin; he may also have heard that a series of furious assaults that had been delivered on August 18th and following

* The I and III Siberian Corps were of good quality, the former, known as the Iron Corps, being the best in the Army. The X Corps was also efficient, but the men of the XVII were lacking in experience. The 5th East Siberian Rifle Division was composed of East Siberian and of Reserve units; the IV Siberian Corps of Siberian Reserve units, and the V Siberian Corps of European Reserve units.

days against the garrison of Port Arthur had most successfully been defeated ; and perhaps he was also subjected to political pressure from Russia. Whatever the reasons the Russian troops were now not only ordered to maintain their positions, but were warned that, if possible, that is, if the enemy allowed the time necessary for the completion of the arrangements to do so, the army would assume the offensive.

General Kuropatkin's new resolution was quickly put to the test, for on August 23rd a forward movement was made by the formations on the left of the First Japanese Army against the troops of the III Siberian Corps. News of this development at once reached the Russian Commander-in-Chief, and by the evening of the 24th he was able to form the opinion that a general advance was imminent by the whole of the forces of the Japanese, and that not only were attacks being made by units from the First Army against the front of the III Siberian Corps, but that a portion of General Nodzu's Fourth Army had begun to envelop its right flank.*

On the 25th the Japanese also began to fight with the covering troops of the Southern Group, and the pressure against the right of the advanced portions of the III Siberian Corps became so vigorous that it was estimated that two Japanese divisions were being employed in this area. The Russians concluded, therefore, that the enemy intended to force their way between and separate the two groups

General Kuropatkin now drew one division of the XVII Corps from the work of entrenching the more advanced of the two positions round Liao-Yang, and sent it to a locality whence support could be given to the III Siberian Corps. The other division of the XVII Corps, which was standing north of the Tai-tzu and to the east of Liao-Yang, was moved to a bridge over the river which had been made close to its junction with the Tang. At the same time, orders were issued to those portions of the V Siberian Corps that had reached the area between Mukden and Liao-Yang that they were to be ready to

* The attack was delivered only by the Guard Division of the First Army, but half of this Division had for about two months been attached to the Fourth Army, and had only returned to the First towards the end of July.

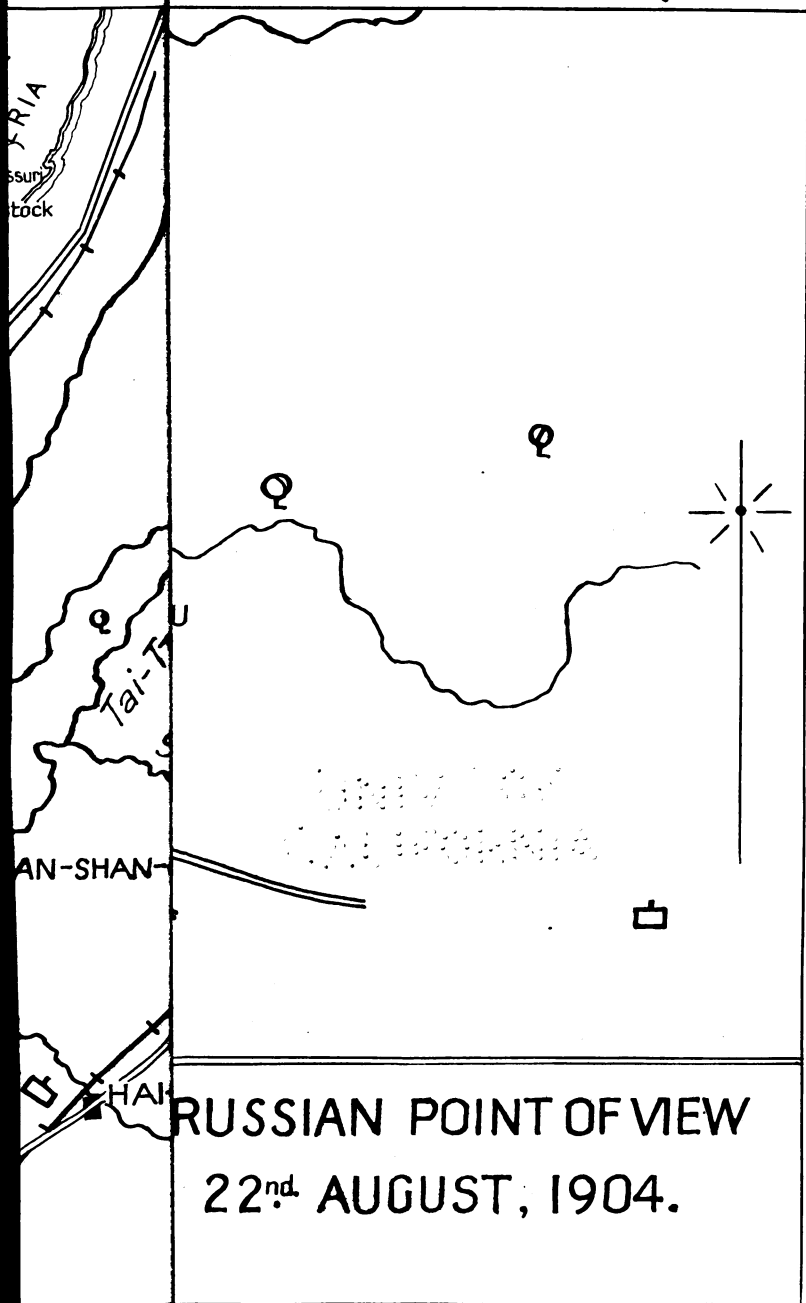
resist any attempt on the part of the Japanese to reach the railway in this neighbourhood ; for it was thought that an advance from Pen-hsi-hu, where it was rumoured that there were strong forces of the enemy, against the line of communication of the Russian Army, might take place simultaneously with the development of the attacks against the Southern and Eastern Fronts. Kuropatkin, however, learned soon afterwards, as a result of a reconnaissance which was made by the Russian detachment at Pen-hsi-hu, that for the moment there was no reason to fear that any such movement would be made.

So violent were attacks that were delivered during the night* of August 25-26th against the X Corps, and on the morning of the 26th against the III Siberian Corps, that almost the whole of the XVII Corps was drawn into the fight or moved close to the front, and consequently the troops in reserve consisted only of part of the V Siberian Corps. During the afternoon of the 26th rain, which for some days had held off, again began to fall heavily ; and in the evening alarming reports reached General Headquarters that the Tang, which had been swelled by the rain that had already fallen during the month, was rising at such an alarming rate that the various fords would shortly become impracticable for the Russians ; and, if so, only one bridge would be available for the troops of the X Corps.

The situation, then, as it may have appeared to Kuropatkin on the evening of August 26th, was as follows :—The Southern Group had held its ground, but had not been seriously pressed ; the III Siberian Corps, with the assistance of part of the XVII Corps, had repulsed strong attacks ; the right and left of the X Corps had been driven off the heights that the troops were holding, but there was every prospect that the men on the right would now be able to maintain their position, and some seventeen battalions of the X and XVII Corps had been concentrated for the purpose of regaining the ground that had been lost on the left flank. Only about one division of the V Siberian Corps remained, however, under the hands of General Kuropatkin to meet such a danger

* At this time of the year the sun rises in Manchuria at about 5.30 a.m., and sets at about 6.30 p.m.

Map N^o 1



To face Page 10

as a movement by the enemy from the direction of Pen-hsi-hu against the Russian line of communication, or to cover the retirement of the Eastern Group. And it must be borne in mind that the Russians believed that numerical superiority still rested with the enemy, and that the Japanese troops were more efficient than their own. To come to a decision is always difficult, but few tasks can be more onerous than to be obliged to make a decision in circumstances when the lives of thousands and the fate of a nation depend on judgment of the commander. It is, therefore, no wonder that General Kuropatkin hesitated whether to reverse the orders that had been given on the 23rd, which would not only lower the *moral* of his troops, but also shake their confidence, for he would inevitably incur the ill-natured reproach of being weak and irresolute ; or to continue the battle in circumstances when the defeat of the X Corps might involve its surrender, or the advance of a strong force from the direction of Pen-hsi-hu might result in the envelopment of the whole army.

During the night of the 26-27th General Kuropatkin made up his mind to draw back the Eastern Force, while, as he believed, it was still physically possible to do so, and orders were issued for the concentration of the army in the positions (fifteen or twenty miles away) round Liao-Yang. Here, owing to the shorter frontages which would be occupied, larger numbers would be available as reserves ; and, as has been explained, there would be many tactical advantages for the Russians.

By this time the Russian soldiers were masters of the art of retreating, and on August 27th and 28th they were assisted by fog, which filled the valleys and covered the plain in the early mornings, and also no doubt by the state in which the unmetalled roads were left when numbers of troops had passed over them. The rear-guards, therefore, were able to hold off the enemy ; and as no difficulty was experienced in crossing over some of the fords in the Tang, the water must either have fallen quickly, or the reports of the height of the river have been exaggerated. The pursuit, which had never been strong, had ceased on the 29th, and the Russians were then able to settle down in the new positions.

CHAPTER III.

THE DEFENCE OF THE "ADVANCED" POSITION BY THE RUSSIANS, AND THE QUESTION OF A COUNTER-ATTACK

General Kuropatkin now disposed his army as follows (Map II) :—In front, half a dozen miles from Liao-Yang, and in what was known as the "advanced" position, there were the I Siberian, the III Siberian, and the X Corps, their right flank being guarded by a cavalry force of 21 squadrons with 12 guns under General Mischenko, and a mixed group of 3,000 men under General Grekov. The left flank was covered by the XVII Corps, which was on the northern bank of the Tai-tzu near its junction with the Tang; and the general reserve, which was in six groups, was round Liao-Yang, the IV Siberian Corps, part of the II Siberian Corps including the 5th East Siberian Rifle Division, and 19 squadrons with 6 guns, under General Samsonov, being on the southern bank of the river, and the V Siberian Corps on the northern bank. In addition no fewer than 32 battalions, 19 squadrons, and 52 guns were, or had been, detached into the Liao Valley, to Pen-hsi-hu, to the banks of the Tai-tzu, to Liao-Yang, and to the railway and roads near it, for the purpose of watching the flanks of the army and securing its immediate communications.

The "advanced" position, which had been occupied by the Russians to the south of the Tai-tzu, was about fifteen miles long, and of great natural strength. It may be said that the left flank rested on the Tai-tzu, a wide river now in flood, and although not unfordable at times in certain places above Liao-Yang, both deeper and wider below this city. The right of the infantry was on a railway embankment, and between this and the river was a plain covered by an unbroken expanse of kao-liang, or giant millet, which was now ten feet in height. The scene can best be pictured by imagining the fen district near Ely, covered by endless fields of hops, which were

ready to be picked. There were no direct roads in this plain, except the wide, unmetalled Mandarin route, which ran close to the railway ; and the ground, if passable by infantry, was impracticable, without hard pioneering work, for cavalry and artillery, except on the muddy tracks which wound round the unfenced fields, and led to and from the numerous villages. The so-called "main position," the bridgehead, was eight or nine miles long, and had been built round Liao-Yang, and in front of ~~six~~ floating bridges and one iron railway bridge ; the bridge that had been thrown near the mouth of the Tang had now been dismantled. The frontages that were now held by the army were certainly not so great as to preclude, if the Russians so desired, an adequate force being kept in hand for the delivery of an attack "when a favourable opportunity had been created by the action of the remainder." In addition, there was ample room for movement both to the south of the river and on its northern bank ; and the manœuvres of the troops would be screened, but also impeded, by the kao-liang, with which the whole of the lower ground was planted. The positions covered by the Russian line of communication, the railway ; and, should the Japanese attempt to avoid the positions, the protection afforded to their flanks by the Tai-tzu would greatly reduce the enemy's power of manœuvring with rapidity. As has already been shown, the Japanese could, in fact, only manœuvre if they were prepared to run grave risk of being defeated in detail, for the Russians could pass troops over the river more quickly and with greater security than the Japanese could do so.

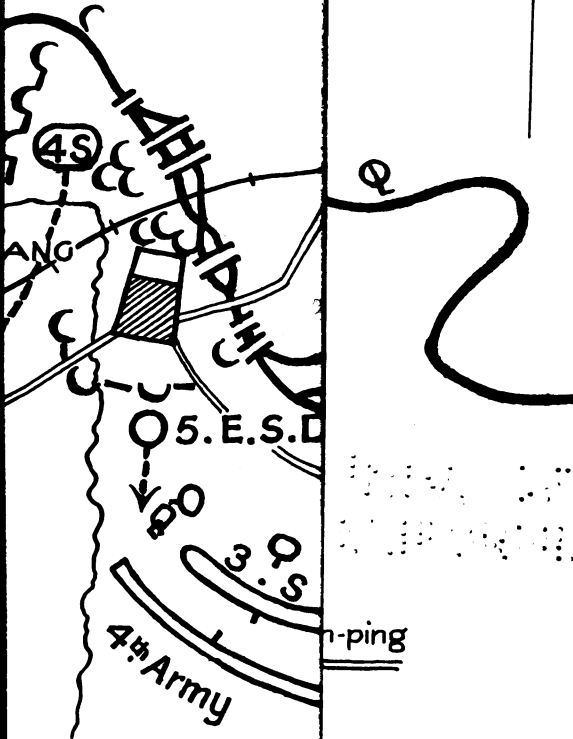
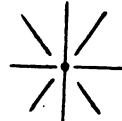
As regards the detail of the features of the ground, the troops of the X Corps and of the III Siberian Corps had been placed on a series of bare, stony, steep-sided hills and knolls, over which ran the track, the so-called Imperial road, from Lang-tzu-shan and Korea. Behind them was the plain and its fields of kao-liang, and in front lay a valley also in part covered with this crop, and perhaps 2,000 yards in width from hill to hill. The men of the I Siberian Corps were on an island of high land, which rose out of the level, to the west of the Ta-ssu brook, and ended abruptly near the railway in a great

dome-shaped, rocky mass, known as Shou-shan-pu, from which a good view was obtainable in every direction. The marshy, millet-grown valley of the Ta-ssu lay between the I and III Siberian Corps, but for some reason, possibly because it could be swept by cross-fire from the hills, this space was not occupied in strength. The kao-liang that covered the approaches to the Shou-shan-pu hills had been rolled flat for about 1,000 yards in a south-westerly and southerly direction, and a glacis had thus been formed, which was more difficult than the standing crop for infantry to traverse; and millet had either not been sown, or, if growing, was cleared before or during the battle on the ground close to the works of the "main" position. There were groups of trenches and gun-pits in the "advanced" position, and redoubts connected by entrenchments in the "main" position. Military pits, over which were three or four lines of barbed wire, had been dug in front of, and about 300 or 400 yards from, portions of both positions; and there were obstacles, and behind them gun-pits, between the works of the "main" position. Entrenchments had also been made on the hills where the units of the XVII Corps had been placed on the northern bank of the Tai-tzu. On the whole, it may be said that the works were of such a character as reasonably well to fulfil the requirement of our Field Service Regulations that all possible means should be employed to improve "the natural, tactical value of the ground by the construction of well-sited trenches and by obstacles." In addition, the city of Liao-Yang was enclosed by gigantic walls, which were thirty or forty feet high, and about ten feet wide at their top.

In order to facilitate traffic behind the lines, sign-posts had been put up at the various cross-roads in the fields—forests is a better word—of kao-liang on the southern bank of the river. Telephonic or telegraphic communication with General Headquarters, which were at Liao-Yang, was laid and kept up by Corps troops from the headquarters of the various corps, as there were no "army" units.

General Kuropatkin could now dispose of approximately 210 battalions, 157 squadrons, the gunners required to man 644 guns, and seven battalions of

EW



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To face Page 14

engineers, a total of about 170,000 fighting men ; this force included 8 battalions and 26 guns belonging to the I European Corps, which reached the front during the battle. Of the guns 570 were field guns, mainly 3-inch quick-firing, and superior in range and power to those of the Japanese, but there were some guns of old pattern in the IV Siberian Corps ; 40 were horse artillery guns, and 28 mountain or horse-mountain guns. There were also 12 mortars, and 16 machine guns (8 with the I Siberian Corps, and 8 with the II Siberian Corps), and 36 howitzers and 28 siege guns, which had been removed from Vladivostock, were in the town of Liao-Yang, but apparently were not used in the battle. The Russians possessed, in addition, one captive balloon, but little more could be seen from it than was visible from the tops of the hills.

The numbers that were allotted to the " advanced " position, in reality the first line, were 90 battalions, 19 squadrons, and 266 guns, or about 70,000 fighting men ; and in the reserves, which were somewhat widespread, were 61½ battalions, 30 squadrons, and 136 guns (including those of the I European Corps), or about 50,000 fighting men, 24 of the battalions, and 56 guns being on the northern bank of the Tai-tzu. The immediate protection of the flanks was entrusted to 26 battalions, 39 squadrons, and 190 guns, or 25,000 fighting men ; 18½ battalions, 50½ squadrons, and 52 guns were detailed for the more distant security of the flanks of the army, 5½ battalions, and 2 squadrons were in Liao-Yang, and the roads and railway near it were guarded by 8½ battalions and 16½ squadrons—a further total of about 25,000 fighting men. (Map III.)

No profit at all can grow if these numbers and arrangements are merely learnt by heart. Little will come even if the objects for the attainment of which the dispositions were made are also fully grasped, unless, in addition, an endeavour is made to try and improve on the measures that were taken by the commander ; an exercise which is, however, much easier after the event than when such factors as the play of the emotions and physical fatigue warp the judgment.

It is evident that, before coming to a decision in regard to the course that is to be followed, a commander-in-chief must not only take into consideration the political situation, and the general military situation in which is included the element of time, time in which to manœuvre, time for the arrival of reinforcements ; but also the strength of the forces that are opposed to each other in the areas where he is in command, their quality, armament, organization, and equipment, the characters and methods of the enemy's leaders, the nature of the ground, the weather. He must, in fact, make up his mind how, with the means that are at his disposal and with due regard to the resistance that will be met, the ultimate aim of the nation can best be attained.

✓ The political objects on account of which the Russians had gone to war, were the obtaining of the control over the communications by sea between Vladivostock and Port Arthur, and those from Vladivostock to the ocean ; and, in addition, they wanted to secure definite possession, not a mere lease, of a port in the Far East which would be free of ice during the winter months ; that is, Port Arthur or Dalny or a harbour in Southern Korea.

As the Eastern Naval Squadron had been defeated, these objects could, in all probability, only be gained, if now obtainable at all, by victory on land, and to this end two alternative methods could be adopted. General Kuropatkin could try definitely to defeat the Japanese in a battle at Liao-Yang, or he could be content merely to repulse them ; that is, to pursue his original policy of gaining time until the Russian Army was both sufficiently numerous and sufficiently well-equipped to justify the assumption of the offensive. Fight he must, unless to retire was essential for the safety of the army. Having regard to the quality of the Russian troops, to the estimate (an over-estimate of some 40,000 fighting men) that had been made of the strength of the Japanese armies (see Map III), and to the fact that the garrison of Port Arthur were no longer in immediate danger, the second would probably have been the better alternative. Dispositions might, therefore, have been made both to check the enemy at the "advanced" position, and also

to parry the manœuvre that would probably be undertaken in view of the boldness that had heretofore been shown by the leaders of the Japanese, of the positions of their forces, and in accordance with their system of tactics; namely, a direct attack combined with a tenacious but deliberate enveloping advance by part, or the whole, of their First Army across the Tai-tzu in some locality above Liao-Yang. In other words, the greater part of the Russian reserve should have been placed at or near Yen-tai station. (Map IV.)

What is actually in men's minds can often be estimated by analysis both of their written words and of the actions. The word "attack" is not mentioned in the orders that were issued by General Kuropatkin, the troops were merely told to take up and "defend" positions. Also, as a result of reports, which came in on August 29th, that a strong force of Japanese was preparing to cross the Tai-tzu at Pen-hsi-hu, where the Russian Group, under General Liubavin, of 4,500 fighting men was guarding the road to Mukden, an order known as Disposition 3 for the Manchurian Army, was drawn up for the withdrawal of the bulk of the troops to the northern bank of the Tai-tzu. In addition, the Russians had for some days been engaged in evacuating the magazines that had been formed at Liao-Yang; and the despatch northwards of stores and material was busily continued throughout the 30th. On the other hand, a large part of the reserve was behind the right flank; that is, in the locality where "from the general situation and nature of the ground the best line," in the broader sense, existed for a counter-attack. Since behind the enemy's left ran their line of communication to Ying-kow, and this line of communication could, so far as physical features were in question, be more easily reached by the Russians than the Russian line of communication by the Japanese. Nevertheless, the XVII Corps and V Siberian Corps were stationed on the northern side of the river, and in localities where, owing to the presence of fords and of bridging material—that of the bridge which had existed near the mouth of the Tang—it was likely that the passage of the stream, if attempted at all near Liao-Yang, would be undertaken;

and cavalry guarded the Tai-tzu both to the east and west of the detachment at Pen-hsi-hu, and also its lower course and the area extending as far as the group on the Liao.

It is possible, but not probable, that the 30,000 troops that were in, or near, the "main" position, had been put there primarily for the purpose of securing the retreat of the corps that were holding the "advanced" position, over the bridges. But it is, on the whole, more likely that, in making these dispositions, General Kuropatkin halted between two opinions, and could not definitely decide whether to place his reserves so that they could best deliver a counter-attack, or so that they could repulse the Japanese. If it were intended to deliver a counter-attack it is, of course, plain that forces should have been massed to the west of Liao-Yang, roads cut in the fields of millet, and the various far-flung detachments reduced both in number and in size ; for the Russians should have endeavoured to effect the security of flanks and communications not by weak, passive measures, but by obliging the enemy to parry blows. If delaying action were to be continued more effective steps should have been taken to meet the stroke which would probably be made by the Japanese—the despatch of the First Army over the Tai-tzu in the reaches above Liao-Yang. The dispositions that were adopted were not those best suited for either eventuality ; and to alter dispositions at a critical moment so as to be able to attack with effect or delay with advantage is rarely practicable, and can never be done with troops of moderate quality. It would certainly have been possible to have gathered all the reserves into the localities on the northern and southern banks of the Tai-tzu close to the bridges, where the formations could be used either to deliver an attack or to check an outflanking movement. But such dispositions would also not have been those best adapted for either purpose ; as it would have been difficult to have deployed the troops quickly for the delivery of an attack against the enemy's left ; and equally difficult to have concentrated large forces against those that might be sent by the Japanese across the Tai-tzu.

As was only natural, the doubtful attitude of the

Map N° 3

Tai-tzu R.

RUSSIAN POINT OF VIEW
30TH AUGUST 1904

Sca_s

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Russian Commander-in-Chief was reflected in that of the commanders of corps ; and on the evening of August 29th even General Stackelberg, the very resolute and capable commander of the I Siberian Corps, demanded a reinforcement of a division or at least of a brigade (six or eight battalions).

In spite of heavy rain early in the day, which converted the low ground, and the tracks on it, into an expanse of sticky mud, the Japanese strongly attacked the troops that were holding the "advanced" position. So vigorous and persistent were their efforts to defeat the III Siberian Corps,* and the I Siberian Corps the right of which they tried to envelop, that General Kuropatkin, who rode to a position from which he could watch this action, was obliged to draw 21 battalions, 3 or 4 squadrons, and 46 guns from the reserve and put them into the fight. Counter-attacks were not made on a large scale, possibly because time could not be spared properly to organize them. The attack against the positions that were held by the X Corps was not so stubbornly pressed, and in consequence was more easily defeated.

When night fell the Russian leader, then, could not be more than fairly content with the progress of events, for of the infantry and guns that had been in reserve on the southern bank of the Tai-tzu, only some 16½ scattered battalions and 34 guns remained in hand ; but the formations on the northern bank of the river were still intact. Further, the comparatively feeble effort that had been made against the X Corps caused him to conclude that the main body of the First Japanese Army (its fighting strength before the battle had been computed as being 65,000) had not yet been engaged.

All was quiet along the front, except at the Shou-shan-pu position where strong attacks were delivered against the troops of the I Siberian Corps. General Kuropatkin, therefore, spent the night of August 30th-31st in reforming the general reserve, so as to be ready for the movement of which he now momentarily expected to receive news, namely, that the bulk of the First Army

* One battalion of this Corps lost all the officers, most of the non-commissioned officers, and about sixty per cent. of the privates.

had crossed the Tai-tzu and was marching towards the Russian line of communications. It is said that one of the greatest of the many difficulties that beset a commander-in-chief in the field is the controlling of the wills of his subordinates ; and colour is lent to this opinion by the unwillingness with which the Russian corps' commanders parted with the troops that had been sent to them. Stackelberg, with perhaps some justification, at first sent a flat refusal to do so, but eventually returned a portion of the units ; Ivanov, the commander of the III Siberian Corps, kept no fewer than eight battalions. However, by the morning of August 31st the general reserve was to a large extent re-established, and commanders of corps had again formed strong local reserves.

There was but little fighting on August 31st by the infantry of the III Siberian Corps and X Corps. At about 10 a.m., in fact, when another violent assault was being delivered against the stubborn troops of the I Siberian Corps, General Vassilev, commanding the 31st Division of the X Corps, which was holding the left of the frontage occupied by the Corps, reported to General Sluchevski, the corps commander, that there was a gap, an area not filled by troops, between the right of the Japanese and the Tai-tzu ; and he asked for permission to make a local counter-attack. General Sluchevski did not dare to sanction this attack on his own responsibility, since, for various reasons, General Kuropatkin kept his immediate subordinates tightly in leading strings, and the request, therefore, was repeated by telephone to General Headquarters.

Now, after the event, it may be thought that the question which had been referred to the Russian Commander-in-Chief, was, at any rate, not difficult to decide. But, as is pointed out in the Field Service Regulations, "a commander must possess high qualities of skill and resolution to choose the right place, and more particularly the right time, for changing from a defensive to an offensive attitude." And no effort of the imagination can quite conjure up the conditions in which General Kuropatkin was placed ; the crushing load of responsibility, the atmosphere of doubt, anxiety, divergent

opinion, conflicting advice, the physical and mental strain. The moment also, as it happened, was more critical than Kuropatkin probably was aware.

The course of the battle on August 31st had been so different from that which it had taken on the previous day, that the Russian Commander-in-Chief may well have suspected that something more or less than a direct attack on the troops in the "advanced" position was in progress.

Much of the time of a leader in the field is spent in guessing, that is, in trying to infer the probable from the apparent. In this case it was now very evident that the enemy's attack was only being pressed by the formations on their left flank, which also were those that were covering the main line of communication of the Japanese armies. As to the reasons for this procedure, it was possible that the inactivity of the remainder had merely been assumed for the purpose of tempting the Russians to leave their strong positions and deliver a counter-attack; but in view of the energy with which the operations were being conducted against Shou-shan-pu, this was unlikely. Alternatively it was possible that the troops that had attacked the III Siberian Corps and the X Corps were not in a condition to renew the battle, and the assaults against the position at Shou-shan-pu might have been undertaken with the object of gaining time in which the rest of the army could regain its fighting power. But, again, this was improbable in view of the fact that on the 30th the main body of the First Japanese Army had almost certainly not taken part in the action. Lastly, the strong efforts to win the trenches at Shou-shan-pu were perhaps being made, either for the purpose of preventing the delivery of a counter-attack by forcing the Russians to use their reserves in defence, or in order to distract attention from a turning movement by other Japanese forces across the Tai-tzu. It is generally judicious to try and rupture the enemy's plans before they can be developed, and it is very dangerous to allow a plodding, but dogged, leaders the time in which to execute the measures that they have in mind. It seems, then, that this was a moment when the Russians might, at any rate, have undertaken the offensive as proposed by

possible

Vassilev; for this would have caused anxiety to the Japanese, and in consequence, disturbed their projects. Further, the information in regard to the enemy's actions, which every general does or should diligently seek after, would almost certainly have been obtained.

Kuropatkin's mind, however, was so much occupied in contemplating the movements that might be made by the enemy, that he was impatient of other matters; and Sluchevski was curtly informed that General Vassilev should send to the general reserve any troops that could be spared. Soon afterwards news reached General Headquarters that the attack on the I Siberian Corps had been repulsed; and, in order to be ready to meet an advance against the Russian left, Kuropatkin now sent eight or ten battalions from the "main" position to the northern bank of the Tai-tzu.

At 11.30 a.m. the Japanese again began to attack the I Siberian Corps*, and at the same time reports reached General Headquarters both from the cavalry and XVII Corps that, at 6 a.m., a long column of troops had forded the Tai-tzu, which must have fallen rapidly, at Lien-tao-wan. It was owing to a breakdown in the telephonic communication that this all-important news was not received at an earlier hour; but it seems that no one thought that it was worth while to send a galloper over the eight or nine miles that separated the telephone office from that of the Commander-in-Chief. Little or no attempt, except by intermittent gun-fire, was made by the XVII Corps to check or hinder the Japanese, who were allowed to make rafts, bridges, entrench, and reconnoitre at will; but constant reports were now sent to General Headquarters.

Kuropatkin also received during the day the disturbing information that a force of Japanese had passed over the Tai-tzu at Pen-hsi-hu, after driving back the Russian detachment of about 6 battalions, 12 squadrons, and 10 guns, approximately 4,500 fighting men, under General Liubavin. The long-feared advance against the line of communication of the Russians had, therefore, at last begun. (Map IV.)

* The losses experienced by the infantry of this Corps on August 30th and 31st were about 3,000 out of 20,000.

In the report on the battle, which was subsequently submitted to the Czar, General Kuropatkin stated that the news from the northern bank of the Tai-tzu, together with the fact that the positions that were being held by the X Corps had not been so strongly attacked as those occupied by the III and I Siberian Corps, now caused him to infer that the main body of (the First Japanese Army) (its fighting strength had been estimated as 65,000) was moving northwards with the object of severing the communications of the Russians. The pressing question, therefore, had arisen how this menacing movement was to be met : by delaying the advance of the First Army while a powerful counter-attack was made against the enemy's left flank : by a direct attack on the troops that had daringly crossed the Tai-tzu : or by merely attempting to check them.

So far as the factors of time and distance were in question, it was even now probable that the Russians could reach the railway, the enemy's vital point, in the area to the south of Liao-Yang before the Japanese could place themselves between Liao-Yang and Mukden. As regards numbers, the XVII Corps, V Siberian Corps, the detachment from the I European Corps, Liubavin's Group, and Samsonov's and other cavalry, about 45,000 or 50,000 fighting men, were opposing or could be sent to check the First Japanese Army. And the IV Siberian Corps, the bulk of the 2nd East Siberian Rifle Division, and the groups under Mischenko and Grekov, between 30,000 and 35,000 fresh or fairly fresh troops, could be moved against the men of the Japanese left, who had been fighting hard for at least thirty-six hours. The men of the X Corps also were in good condition. On the other hand, the strength of the Second Japanese Army had originally been estimated as being 65,000 fighting men and that of the Fourth Army as 36,000 fighting men, so that the numerical superiority would probably not rest with the Russians who could, if these arrangements were made, only put about 90,000 to 95,000 into action on the southern bank of the Tai-tzu ; a force no more than equal to that which, as the Russians might suppose, was still available to oppose them. The alternatives were either

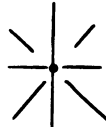
again to shorten the line by falling back to the "main" position, and to concentrate the troops that would then be available against the First Japanese Army, which had apparently been "exposed" without "hope of support from the remainder." Or, in accordance with the principle that the "greatest possible strength should be employed for the decisive attack," the whole army might be moved to the northern bank of the Tai-tzu, and such troops as were not required to guard the fords and watch its course, either sent to deliver an attack against, or to stop, those portions of the enemy's armies that had crossed over the river.

No leader who held the fighting power of his troops in lower estimation than that of the enemy, would venture to undertake so daring an operation as an attack in a southerly direction, unless convinced that superiority in numbers would more than counter-balance weakness in other respects. The first alternative, therefore, may be rejected. As between the others, the choice—the factor of time again—would depend on whether it was believed that the whole army, even if hard pressed by the enemy, could be brought safely across the Tai-tzu; and if so, whether force could more rapidly be concentrated against the First Japanese Army than the Second and Fourth Armies could come to its direct assistance. If not, it would evidently be judicious to place in the "main" position a group sufficiently formidable to oblige the Japanese to keep on the southern bank of the river a large number of troops for the security of their communications. Also, if the First Army were checked or repulsed, the retention by the Russians of a foothold on the southern bank of the Tai-tzu would be useful in their future operations.

General Kuropatkin refused the first alternative for reasons which are set forth both in his book on the war and in his despatches. In the book it is stated that the idea of an attack against the armies under Generals Oku (Second) and Nodzu (Fourth) was rejected because it was feared that ~~these commanders~~ might withdraw their forces and lure the Russians southwards (which actually was improbable as the abandonment of the

Map N° 4

VIEW
4 ENTAI
lines



PEN-HSI-HU

10 miles →

SWALLOW HILL

Bulk of 1st Army
50,000

To face Page 24.

advanced depots at Sha-ho village would have been involved). If this manœuvre were made, and the Russians fell into the trap, the First Army, under General Kuroki, which would be opposed only by the unseasoned troops of the XVII Corps and certain detachments, would be able to cut the Russian line of communication and stop the essential movement of ammunition, stores, supplies and reinforcements to the front. The despatch dealing with the battle contains these words :—" My general reserve was no longer strong enough to ensure the success of a counter-stroke in a southerly direction. A withdrawal to the ' main ' position shortened the line to be defended, making it possible to concentrate a considerable portion of the army north of the Tai-tzu. There was, undoubtedly, a danger that Kuroki would cut our communications, and the most pressing duty of the army seemed to be to guard them."

This despatch conveys the impression that the Russian Commander-in-Chief was now definitely prepared to subordinate his movements to those of the enemy, and intended merely to " guard " the communications of the army. Perhaps at first this may have been in his mind, but it was not so afterwards. At any rate the instruction known as Disposition 3 for the Manchurian Army (an order for the withdrawal of the troops from the " advanced " position across the Tai-tzu), was issued at noon to some, if not to all, of the commanders of corps, and they were informed that preparations might be made for retirement from the " advanced " position, but that no movements were to be commenced until nightfall.

A second assault against the I Siberian Corps ended at 4 p.m., and was unsuccessful except for a lodgment in one trench. And between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. orders for the retreat of the troops from the " advanced " position were circulated, and Samsonov's cavalry were sent off to protect the left flank of the XVII Corps.

The Russians, whose plans were helped by a violent thunderstorm, which raged during the first part of the night of August 31st/September 1st, then spent the hours of darkness in making fresh dispositions ; and they were not molested by the Japanese whose troops were easily held off by rear-guards.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RUSSIAN COUNTER-ATTACK AND SUBSEQUENT RETREAT

General Kuropatkin now allotted for the defence of the "main" position 54 battalions, 10 squadrons, and 136 guns, about 43,000 fighting men, drawn from the IV Siberian Corps, which was already in this area, the 5th East Siberian Rifle Division, the V Siberian Corps, and the X Corps. These troops, which were under General Zarubaiev, the commander of the IV Siberian Corps, however, had not settled down in the redoubts and the trenches, many of which had been flooded by the rain, until 2 p.m. on September 1st. Eighteen battalions, 4 squadrons, and 48 guns of the III Siberian Corps had also been placed under Zarubaiev, but these were subsequently sent across the Tai-tzu.

The most reliable formations, but also those that had already done the hardest fighting, the I and III Siberian Corps, and the bulk of the X Corps, meanwhile crossed the river and then slowly moved north-eastwards; so that eventually 92 battalions,* 79 squadrons, and 352 guns, upwards of 70,000 fighting men, including the majority

* These figures are given in the Russian Official Account, but the numbers mentioned in the orders, known as Disposition 4 for the Manchurian Army, are:—

	Battalions.	Squadrons.	Guns.	Mortars.	Battalions of Engineers.
XVII Corps (about 16 bns. with 3 squad- rons and 68 guns formed the pivot)	23	18	110	12	1
X Corps ...	21	6	85	—	1
I Siberian Corps ...	18	8	48	—	1
III Siberian Corps (Orlov) V Siberian	18	4	48	—	1
Corps ...	13	3	22	—	—
Grekov's Group ...	1½	14	6	—	—
Mischenko ...	—	21	12	—	—
Samsonov ...	—	19	6	—	—
Rear-guard ...	6	2	8	—	—
	100½	95	345	12	4
Main Position ...	64	10	128	24	2½

of the troops that were already in these localities, but without the groups that were guarding the river, flanks, and railway, would be massed on the northern bank of the Tai-tzu, to the east of Liao-Yang, for the purpose of resisting the First Japanese Army. When this concentration had been made, it was apparently the intention of General Kuropatkin to deliver an attack, against the First Army, which would be pivoted on the positions that were being held by the right of the XVII Corps; but, since it was doubtful when the corps from the southern bank would reach the area from which the advance was to be made, no time was yet fixed for its commencement. Meanwhile, the XVII Corps, two groups of the V Siberian Corps, one of which, consisting of 13 battalions of reservists, 3 squadrons, and 22 guns, about ~~10,000 men~~, was under General Orlov near Yen-tai station, Samsonov's cavalry, Liubavin's detachment, and the cavalry that had been guarding the river, were to cover the movements of the others.

"To initiate a counter-attack on a large scale without due preparation," say the Field Service Regulations, "is to court failure." But to delay its delivery too long is surely to demand defeat, since the longer the attack is postponed the better will the enemy either be prepared to meet it; or they may themselves anticipate the counter-attack by continuing the offensive and obliging the other side to use men for the weaker purpose of defence. Kuropatkin, then, was in one of war's common dilemmas, for the art consists in the application of judgment, of using methods according to circumstances, not in following blindly even the best of rules.

To have made an attack with the units of the XVII and V Siberian Corps before the Japanese could have assembled strong forces in the areas to the north of the river, and consolidated the ground that had been gained, would from some points of view have been advantageous. But these corps were lacking both in training and experience, and General Kuropatkin, therefore, decided to follow the other principle.

At about 1 a.m. on September 2nd, then, orders, Disposition 4, were issued that the troops of the XVII

Corps were to delay the enemy by defending a knoll, which was known afterwards as Manju Yama, and its vicinity, while the X Corps and I Siberian Corps were to advance at dawn, the first to the left of the XVII Corps, the second to a point three or four miles farther north. The group under Orlov was to guard the left of the I Siberian Corps, Samsonov's cavalymen were to make reconnaissances in the direction of Pen-shi-hu, and the reserve was to consist of the main body of the III Siberian Corps and Mischenko's cavalry.

Manju Yama is a little knoll situated on a spur, about 2,500 yards in length, which is pushed out north-eastwards from a large and much higher mass of hills where the main body of the XVII Corps had been posted. The knoll, which was held by a strong advanced group of this corps, is about four miles from and to the west-north-west of the point where the Japanese had now made a bridge over the Tai-tzu, the intervening ground being lower until Swallow Hill, which overlooked the bridge, is reached. Manju Yama, however, stood prominently up and was a landmark in the unending fields of kao-liang, which covered the whole area, and even came within a few yards of the crest; the railway between Liao-Yang and Mukden was also visible from its summit. Nevertheless, to some who went over the field after the battle it did not appear that, apart from considerations of *moral*, its loss would very materially have weakened the position of the XVII Corps, although to hold it, and in doing so increase their power of protecting their bridges, was certainly of great importance to the Japanese (Map V).

Neither telephonic nor telegraphic communication had, on September 2nd, been established between the corps that had been moved over the Tai-tzu and General Headquarters. Since, "in military matters, two and two do not make four unless they are brought together in concerted action," this lack of the power of sending orders quickly may have been one of the reasons why Kuropatkin rode eastwards, in the morning, to or towards the headquarters of the XVII Corps; and at about 10 a.m. took personal charge of the operations on the northern bank of the river; and here he received the

news that during the night Manju Yama had been captured by the Japanese.

While he was trying to get into communication with the other formations, the Japanese made a half-hearted attack, which was repulsed by the Russians ; and then portions of the XVII and X Corps attempted, but failed, to recover the hill at noon. Kuropatkin now sent orders, by messenger, that the I Siberian Corps was to co-operate in an attack that would be made by the XVII Corps, but the time when the attack would be delivered was not mentioned ; and a warning was also despatched to Orlov that he was to act cautiously, as Japanese troops could be seen on the hills three miles to the north of Manju Yama, where are off-shoots of a cluster of larger heights four miles farther to the north at the Yen-tai coal mines.

Orlov, meanwhile, had already been given orders by General Bilderling, the commander of the XVII Corps, that he was to support an attack on Manju Yama, which would be made by this Corps ; and had also received instructions from Kuropatkin that, if the XVII Corps were attacked, his group must go to its assistance. Before the second message from Kuropatkin reached him, Orlov had heard of the loss of Manju Yama ; he could also see, by watching the bursting of shells from the hills at Yen-tai station, that the enemy were engaging the XVII Corps. As he was a firm believer in offensive action which, in his opinion, had hitherto been much neglected by the Russians, Orlov, between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. directed the bulk of his troops to quit their positions and, plunging into the forest of kao-liang, tried to lead these raw reservists to the XVII Corps by the uncertain clue of the sound of gun-fire ; as no sign-posts had been erected in this area, nor apparently were there any maps of it, soon after the advance began the leading battalion stumbled unexpectedly on a force of the enemy, and was at once driven back in disorder. It seems that Orlov now halted, and, although supported by dismounted Cossacks from Samsonov's Division, reported at 11.30 a.m. to Kuropatkin that he was in difficulties. Soon afterwards Disposition 4, and

subsequently the warning to be cautious, came in from General Headquarters. At 1 p.m. the Japanese began to attack, and Orlov then decided to retire. The reservists, who were already half demoralised by the strange surroundings in which they found themselves, gave way too quickly, and as they were hurrying off the field fell in, at 3 p.m., with the I Siberian Corps.

After crossing the Tai-tzu General Stackelberg, the commander of this Corps, had moved his men to the area whence the attack was to have been made. While going forward the orders came in that the I Siberian Corps was to make an attack, and was to take its place between the XVII Corps and Orlov's Group. As no time had, however, been mentioned for the delivery of the attack, and as his men were both weary and one column had been delayed owing to its line of march being crossed by Mischenko's cavalry, Stackelberg halted at about 12.30 p.m. to close up his units. Soon after continuing the march the I Siberian Corps came suddenly at 3 p.m. on Orlov's disorganized troops. There was a sharp altercation between the two commanders, and Orlov was shortly afterwards wounded when trying to rally and lead his reservists against the enemy. The I Siberian Corps was then in action against the Japanese, and while this fighting was in progress Stackelberg received a message from Kuropatkin to the effect that, as Orlov's men had been beaten, the I Siberian Corps was not to advance until troops from the reserve had come to its support. At 6 p.m., however, Stackelberg decided to fall back, for, since his left had apparently been uncovered by the retirement of Orlov's Group, he feared that the enemy would envelop it by moving westwards from the Yen-tai mines over the hills towards the station.

While these important developments had been taking place, no further attacks had been made against the enemy's position on Manju Yama, the time having been spent in assembling infantry of the XVII and X Corps, and bringing up guns to support them. During the afternoon Kuropatkin heard of Orlov's defeat, but also that the enemy had been checked at the "main" position. At 5 p.m. it seems that he became impatient

of further delay and, after sending orders that the I Siberian Corps was to support the troops that were about to attack Manju Yama, Kuropatkin superseded Bilderling, and placed the conduct of the operation in the hands of Sluchevski, the commander of the X Corps. Before Sluchevski had had time in which to grasp the situation, in fact when he had ridden forward for the purpose of examining the ground while the hill was being shelled by a mass of 150 guns, twenty-five battalions of the XVII and X Corps delivered an assault and regained the summit after nightfall. Unfortunately, the commander of the detachment from the X Corps had previously been told that his units were to be sent back into reserve when no longer required ; and he, therefore, insisted on withdrawing them. Disheartened by this retirement the remainder also evacuated Manju Yama, which was reoccupied by the Japanese.

During the day General Kuropatkin had also become anxious lest the enemy, who had merely closed on the " main " position, should move troops across the Tai-tzu in the reaches below Liao-Yang ; and he, therefore, sent a force of no fewer than twelve battalions to guard this area. Instructions were given, in addition, that General Zarubaiev should make a demonstration from the north of the " main " position, for the purpose of ascertaining whether the Japanese were in force on the bank of the Tai-tzu. This was done and, after a sharp little fight, it was found that no large number of the enemy were in this part of the field. For the rest the Russians held their own in the " main " position, which, however, was only bombarded by the enemy.

General Kuropatkin had returned at nightfall to his headquarters, a railway train in a siding on the right bank of the Tai-tzu, and here he received the glad news of the capture of Manju Yama, to offset that of the defeat of Orlov's men which was already known. Orders for further attacks against the enemy's forces to the north of the river had been prepared and were about to be issued, when, at 3 a.m., on September 3rd, a report came in that the reserves in the " main " position, which was being fiercely attacked, had been reduced to a strength

of three battalions, and that ammunition was running short. The deficiency of ammunition was remedied almost immediately by the arrival of a train-load from the north, but it is not certain whether this was known at the time at General Headquarters. Soon afterwards General Kuropatkin heard of the retreat of the I Siberian Corps, which was also said not to be in a condition either to go forward or to repulse a strong attack. In spite of this discouraging information, it seems that the Russian Commander-in-Chief was still fully determined to retain his hold on Liao-Yang, although the group under General Liubavin had been unable to check the Japanese force which was advancing north-westwards from Pen-hsi-hu. At 6 a.m., however, a message was received that the enemy had recaptured Manju Yama, and the shock of this unexpected development, added to the heavy strain of all his other anxieties, quite broke down Kuropatkin's resolution. Owing to the comparative inactivity on September 2nd of the enemy's forces that had crossed the river at Lien-tao-wan, a suspicion had also developed at General Headquarters that the main body of the First Japanese Army had not been in action; and, under the influence of bad news, the belief or fear now quickly gained ground that this force had been pressing northwards, perhaps past Liubavin's Group, and was about to envelop the Russian left.

A decision, plainly, was required at once, and the man who had to make it must have been tired out physically and mentally, and also depressed by misfortune. It is not difficult, therefore, to understand that Kuropatkin was induced to give way, to withdraw the troops whilst as yet he believed it was practicable to break off the fight, and to preserve the army on the security of which rested all the Russian interests in Manchuria.*

September 3rd, therefore, was passed in making preparations to retreat; and, although the pressure of the Japanese had distinctly slackened during the day—there was little or no fighting other than by gun-fire on either the Eastern or Southern Front—the retreat of the

* As will be explained, the situation was very different from what it appeared to be to the Russians.

Russian Army began at nightfall, with the evacuation of the "main" position. The retirement of these formations was skilfully effected, and the Russians were able to destroy or dismantle all the floating bridges over the Tai-tzu, and to set fire to the wooden roadway of the iron railway bridge.

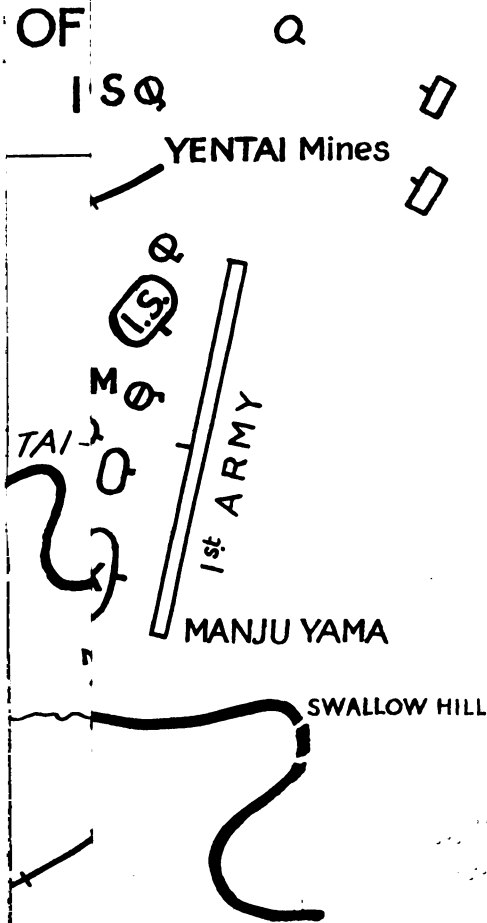
There was a thick fog, which did not clear until 11 a.m. on September 4th, and subsequently the Russian rear-guards were not seriously pressed, as few if any of the enemy's troops succeeded in crossing the river at Liao-Yang. Meanwhile, on the Eastern Front the enemy were held off by a strong line formed, from right to left, of the XVII Corps, which was to the north-west of Manju Yama, the III Siberian Corps, the I Siberian Corps astride of the Yen-tai railway, where a sharp action with the Japanese occurred after darkness, Samsonov's cavalry, Liubavin's group and detachments of the I European Corps from Mukden.

In spite of the efforts of the staff to regulate the traffic along the wide track which was dignified by the title Mandarin Road, congestion inevitably occurred when it narrowed at bridges or when traversing villages; and a heavy thunderstorm, which burst on the morning of the 5th, added to the difficulty of moving.

When, on this day, masses of vehicles and men also converged on the road from the eastern front—to have moved through the kao-liang would have been suicidal—the crowding became so great that the column, now a mere mixture of units, was checked for hours at a time. No one, however, seemed to be disturbed or alarmed, the silence in fact was almost unnatural; and as was reported by the German military attaché, who watched the march, the Russian at all times quiet and long-suffering is used to disorder and always finds his way about in it.

The pursuit was again weak, the rear-guards showed a bold front, and again, in spite of congestion, progress was made. In the evening, therefore, General Kuropatkin was able to telegraph to the Czar that the Russians had extricated themselves from a difficult situation, and were well on the way to Mukden.

Very heavy losses are not likely to be experienced when flanks can be turned, and when the force whose communications are in danger can, and does, put an end to the struggle by giving way. The Russian Army in this action lost only 2,400 killed, 14,000 wounded, and no more than 1,100 were missing. Stores and broken vehicles were left to the enemy, but few, if any, guns. The hardest fighting was done by the I and III Siberian Corps, but Samsonov's cavalry (19 squadrons) suffered only 59 casualties, and 99 men were killed and wounded in Mischenko's Group of 21 squadrons.



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CHAPTER V

OPERATIONS OF THE JAPANESE.

THE PROBLEMS BEFORE THE JAPANESE IN AUGUST, 1904, AND THEIR INITIAL SUCCESS IN THE BATTLE

It has already been explained that the plan of campaign that was adopted for the armies of the Japanese in 1904, consisted of the simultaneous execution of two projects, each of which was of the first importance. The one was an attack, in combination with the navy, on the Russian Eastern Squadron, which had taken refuge in the harbour of Port Arthur ; the other, an offensive against the forces of the enemy that were holding the rest of Manchuria.) The second of these measures involved a converging advance by three armies in the direction of Liao-Yang ; and in the course of this movement fighting took place towards the end of July, the results of which were to bring the Second and Fourth Armies* into close touch with one another ; but the First Army was still in the valley of the Lan, about twenty-five miles away from the Fourth, its communications to the Ya-lu being guarded by a detachment (Guard Kobi) under General Umezawa, which watched a force of Russians who were at Penhsi-hu. (Map VI.)

During the first fortnight in August the Japanese were obliged to halt, partly because torrents of rain had rendered movement on the unmetalled tracks which at that time passed for roads in Manchuria quite

* The Second Army now consisted of the 3rd, 4th and 6th Divisions, the 1st Cavalry Brigade and 1st Artillery Brigade ; the Fourth Army of the 5th and 10th Divisions and 10th Kobi Brigade ; and the First Army of the Guard, 2nd and 12th Divisions, and Guard Kobi Brigade. A division contained 12 infantry battalions, 3 squadrons, 6 six-gun batteries, 1 battalion of engineers, and administrative troops ; and the establishment of fighting men was about 14,000. The 5th, 10th, and 12th Divisions were armed with mountain guns, the others with field guns. A Kobi Brigade comprised six battalions, with or without artillery and engineers. The only machine guns were six hotchkiss guns with the Cavalry Brigade, which was of eight squadrons with six field guns.

impossible ; in part because it was necessary to reorganize the lines of communication of the Second and Fourth Armies, by using the port of Ying-kow* after the channel of the Liao River had been swept clear of mines ; partly in order to await the arrival of drafts, since it was rightly believed that the strength of the Russian armies already exceeded that of the Japanese.

7.22
Ever since the Battle of Te-li-ssu, which took place on June 14th and 15th, the actions of the Russians had been of one pattern. At Yang-tzu Ling and Yu-shu Ling, at Ta-shih-chiao and Hsi-mu-cheng they had, after offering a strong resistance during the day, retired when night fell ; although such local successes as had been gained by the Japanese were not of sufficient importance to necessitate a withdrawal. It would, therefore, be a reasonable conclusion that, pending the arrival of large reinforcements, which were known to be on the way from Europe, the enemy intended to avoid decisive action ; and if so, it would evidently be judicious for the Japanese to force a decision and fight a battle before this accession of strength could be received by the Russians.

The arrangements of the Japanese for this battle had not been completed when the Russian squadron made an attempt to break out of Port Arthur ; but with a few exceptions the vessels were again driven by the Japanese into the harbour. The fighting naval force which remained in Port Arthur was on paper about equal to that of the Japanese. But, although the Russian squadron

* The line of communication was now organized as follows :—Ammunition for the Second and Fourth Armies was brought in the main from Ta-lien-wan (which is a few miles to the north of Dalny), on the Russian railway, in trains of from thirty to forty trucks, which were man-handled as engines were not available ; one train reached the front daily. Supplies and stores, other than such as could be purchased locally, were sent by sea to Ying-kow, and thence in junks up the rivers to within one or two stages of the advanced base—Hai-cheng, and later to Sha-ho. The food, etc., was next carried in hired Chinese transport to the advanced base, and forward in military transport. In the case of the First Army munitions, stores, and supplies were moved on a light railway from the Ya-lu to Feng-huang-cheng, and then for seventy miles in hired Chinese transport. As the Chinese refused to approach the front, and as in many places the ground was impracticable for vehicles, the military transport was supplemented by a large body of coolies that were brought from Japan. For a short time during the Battle of Liao-Yang, ammunition was obtained by the troops of the First Army from Sha-ho. (Map 1.)

was still capable of mischief, experience had shown that in training, efficiency, and *moral* the personnel were on so much lower a plane than the Japanese, that it may not unjustly be said that this success had altered the military situation radically in their favour. The puzzling question, then, must now have arisen whether the siege of Port Arthur, that is, the attack from the land on the Russian squadron, was to be suspended, and force, if time permitted, "concentrated" on the northern front, which, for the moment, was evidently the "decisive place"; or whether the Japanese should "maintain" their original "objectives," and attack both the fortress and the enemy's army.

Towards the middle of August preparations for the delivery of an assault on the garrison of Port Arthur had been completed, and the field armies had not only received large drafts, but also the 11th Kobi Brigade, of six battalions, which joined the Second Army, and the Guard Kobi Regiment, of two battalions, which was sent to the First Army.* And now Marshal Oyama, whose headquarters had recently been moved from Japan to Hai-cheng, made the fateful decision that the plan of campaign should not be changed, and that the attacks should be delivered simultaneously, on August 18th, against the garrison of Port Arthur and the Russian field armies.

Rain then fell so heavily in the northern theatre of the war that movement was impracticable, but furious and unsuccessful attacks were made on Port Arthur on the 18th, and were continued with decreasing violence until August 24th. On the 22nd, when the weather had improved, and when it must have been evident that the assault on the works at Port Arthur had failed, Oyama

* The strengths of the Armies were approximately as follows:—Second Army, 48,000 fighting men, with 290 guns; of these 216 were 2·95 inch partially quick-firing field guns with the infantry, 6 field guns were with the cavalry, and the other guns were 60 3·5 inch mortars, and also 4 6-inch howitzers and 4 4·2 inch guns mounted in railway trucks. Fourth Army—31,000 fighting men, with 72 2·96-inch mountain guns. First Army—41,000 fighting men, with 72 field guns, and 36 mountain guns; and Umezawa's Brigade, 5,000 fighting men, with 12 field guns (6 taken from the Russians), and 4 mountain guns. A grand total of about 125,000 fighting men, of whom 110,000 were infantry, with 486 guns.

gave orders for the First, Second, and Fourth Armies to advance towards Liao-Yang. It is so easy to be clever after the event, that this decision may now seem almost to be a matter of course, since to have gone back would have been ruin ; and even to have relapsed into inactivity after and because of a reverse would have depressed the troops, who would have lost the strong opinion of themselves that had been won after so many months of almost unbroken success. The initiative, the much-coveted power of making the first move, would also have passed to the enemy, who could have attacked the divided portions of the Japanese field armies after reinforcements had been received from Europe and at their leisure. On the other hand, the Russians had definitely proved at Port Arthur how formidable they were when holding entrenchments which could not be either outflanked or enveloped, and it was known that strong positions, the flanks of which were secured by the Tai-tzu, had been prepared round Liao-Yang, where a number of bridges had been made over the river. It was also believed that the strength of the Russian forces was at least 20,000 greater than that of the Japanese ; and the enemy's troops were under the personal command of General Kuropatkin, whose military reputation was world-wide. In these circumstances, the armies of the Japanese could certainly not remain in separation from one another, and must at least be concentrated so as to be prepared for any eventuality.

The orders that were issued to the commanders of the Japanese armies were that the First Army was, on August 26th, to win the heights on the western bank of the Tang, and obtain close touch with the Fourth Army ; at the same time the Second Army was to advance to the (southern) Sha, and the Fourth was to fill in the space between the other armies. The plan, in fact, was to bring the three armies into contact with one another, and then to act according as circumstances might require. But Kuroki's army was first to close with the enemy, and preparations were to be made so as to enable the troops of this army quickly to pass over the Tai-tzu ; since it was still not beyond the bounds of possibility that the enemy

would continue merely to fight delaying actions, and would fall back towards the reinforcements that were fast nearing the front.

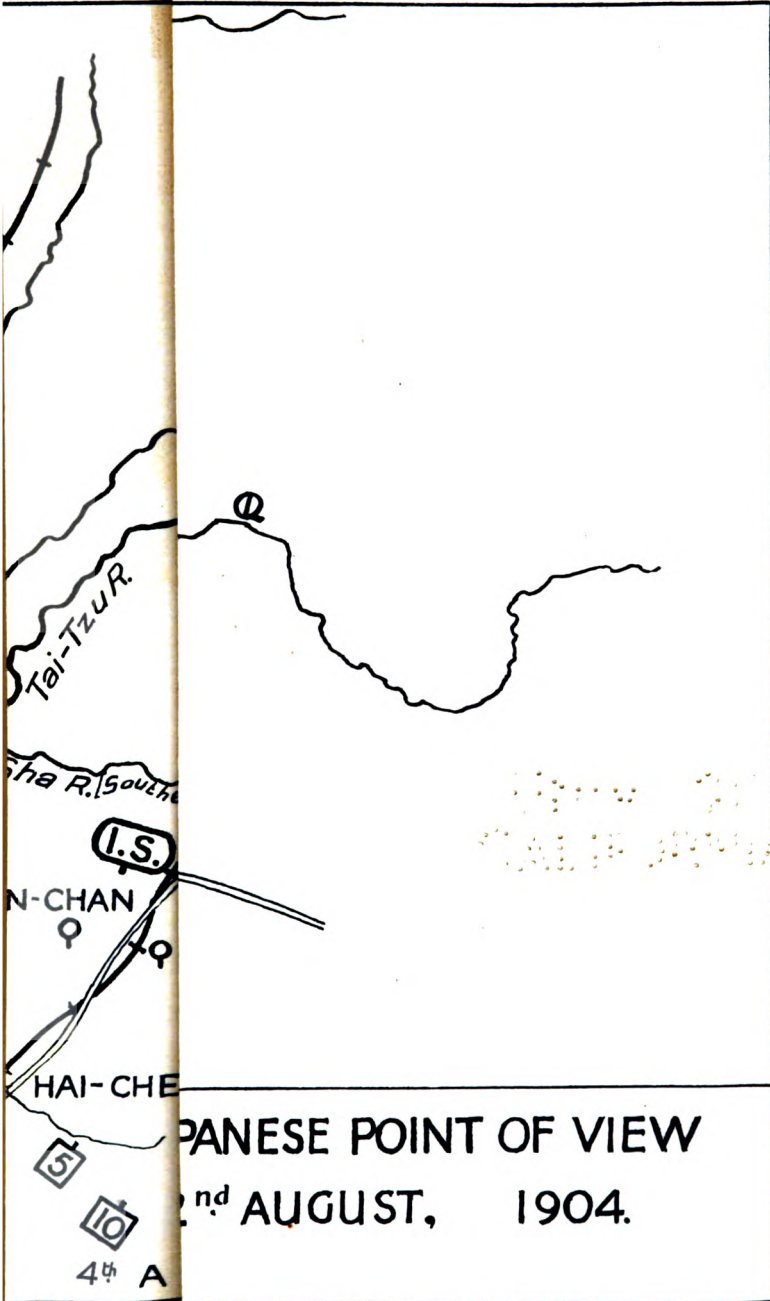
Several more daring alternatives to this procedure can readily be suggested. The Japanese might, for instance, have tried to separate the two groups of Russians, at the risk of being enveloped themselves if they failed to do so, by penetrating into the interval between the southern and eastern forces, and then, while holding off one, defeating the other. Or, what is called "preparatory action" in Field Service Regulations, might have been undertaken, namely, an attack by the Second Army on the troops that were standing at An-shan-chan; and when this group had been closely engaged, Kuroki's army might have been used to deliver the "decisive attack" in a "direction determined in advance"; that is, to drive the whole of the Russian forces from Liao-Yang and the bridges, and into the angle that is formed by the Tai-tzu to the west of the city. The Japanese could not venture to move their whole army eastwards, and away from Ying-kow and the railway, for the purpose of circling round and so turning the positions that were held by the Russians; since to have sent food and ammunition to the troops would then have been very difficult, if not impracticable; and in case of defeat, or even of repulse, the armies of the Japanese would probably have been cut off from the localities whence supplies and munitions were mainly drawn. Nor, having regard to the position of the First Army, which must have moved across the front of the Russian lines, was it practicable to march the whole of the forces westward, and then up the right bank of the Tai-tzu; and to have moved farther to the west and across the great Liao River would have brought the Japanese too close to China proper—the boundary is not far from its western bank of the Liao (see Map I)—whose neutrality it would be impolitic to infringe.

Under the plan that was adopted by the Japanese the Russians would, at best, be driven along their communications, and towards their bridges, not away from them; since, if the First Army were successful, the

Russian troops at An-shan-chan would inevitably conform to the retreat of the eastern group. Also the enemy's communications, which it was so important for the Russians to guard and the Japanese to gain (as along them were brought all that was necessary to enable the army to fight and even to exist), could then only be reached if the Japanese were prepared to run the risk of placing one part of their army on the northern, and the other on the southern, bank of the wide Tai-tzu. But it seems that, in view of the enemy's superiority in numbers, and of the reputation of their Commander-in-Chief, Marshal Oyama could not yet venture to manoeuvre and expose his armies either to defeat in detail, or to the loss of their principal lines of communication. He, therefore, decided in the first instance to close their front by the shortest routes, namely, by going forward; and, in order to draw the attention of the Russians to their communications and away from those of the Japanese at Ying-kow, which were not directly covered by strong forces, the first attack was to be made by the men of Kuroki's army.

Had the First Army been moved south-westwards, so as to fill the gap between it and the Fourth, all the advantages of its menacing position to the communications of the Russians would have been forfeited. Grave difficulty might also have been experienced in maintaining the troops, since it might not have been practicable easily to obtain supplies and munitions from the magazines that had been formed along the roads that lead north-westwards from Feng-huang-cheng, and the area to the south-west of them was exceptionally rugged and undeveloped.

To have moved the Second and Fourth Armies eastwards, towards the First, would have been equally disadvantageous, since these troops would then have been farther from the Ying-kow and the railway, and would no longer have been able effectively to cover and protect them against attacks by the Russians. An army, as Frederick the Great often said, does, indeed, move on its belly. Still, it was a fine, even if it now seems to be an obvious, resolve to decide that the numerically weaker force must concentrate by fighting its way forward.



Scale, miles

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The Guard Division, which was on the left of the First Army, advanced on August 23rd and 24th, apparently because the distance that had to be covered before an attack could be made was greater than that over which the 2nd and 12th Divisions of this Army must move ; and the leading units of the Guard soon began to fight with the covering troops of the III Siberian Corps.

August 25th was spent by the men of the First Army in making preparations for the delivery of a powerful offensive. On the night of the 25-26th the 2nd and 12th Divisions attacked the front that was held by the X Russian Corps, and on the morning of the 26th the Guards endeavoured to envelop the right of the III Siberian Corps, where the ground was more favourable than was the case at other portions of its front. The Guards were repulsed, after hard fighting, although the small reserve of the army (the two battalions of the Guard Kobi Regiment) was sent to help them, but the other divisions met with some success. It had, apparently, been the intention of General Kuroki to force the centre of the long Russian line at the place where contact was made between the troops of the X Corps and III Siberian Corps. This was not accomplished, but the 2nd Division drove the Russians from their front line, and the men of the 12th captured, and held, a rocky peak, which was garrisoned by the troops of the Russian left, and overlooked the important North Pa-pan pass. The Second and Fourth Armies had, meanwhile, moved on the 26th close to the enemy's positions at An-shan-chan, driving in their advanced troops.

To the astonishment of the Japanese, the Russians, on the August 27th, pursued their former policy and broke off the action. Since there was now considerable doubt whether the enemy would again stand to fight in the positions round Liao-Yang, orders were, on the 28th, issued that the First Army was to be prepared to cross the Tai-tzu. Meanwhile, the three Japanese armies, whose movements were delayed by fog, rain, and the necessity of passing over the Tang and Sha, kept to the general lines of their plan of action, and following up the Russians slowly converged on Liao-Yang.

On the 29th it was known that the enemy had occupied and were prepared to hold the strong entrenchments that had been prepared in the area to the south of Liao-Yang; and the day, therefore, was spent by the Japanese in closing up their columns of route and in preparations for the renewal of the battle. Early next morning the troops advanced against these formidable lines under a lowering sky, and rain which turned the tracks in the plain into mere lanes of knee-deep, glutinous mud.

It seems (Map VII) that Marshal Oyama possessed fairly accurate information as to the topography of the battlefield, and as to the presence and location of the bridges, and the dispositions of the Russian forces. He was able, therefore, to allot definite tasks to the troops of the three armies.

The Second Army, 32,000 fighting men with 242 guns, except the 4th Division, which was retained at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief, and the Cavalry Brigade, which was to watch the left flank, was sent against the Shou-shan-pu Heights. The Fourth Army, 31,000 fighting men, with 72 mountain guns, with which the Second was to co-operate, was to attack the Russian centre. The First Army was apparently to hold the enemy's left, and at the same time be prepared to cross the Tai-tzu when required. The Guards, now about 12,000 fighting men, with 36 field guns, therefore were moved against the X Corps, and on their right and between them and the river, were the 2nd and 12th Divisions, ready to undertake its passage, as was Umezawa's group* in the area to the south of Pen-hsi-hu. A force, then, of about 75,000 fighting men, with 350 guns, was detailed to "hold the enemy to his ground and force him to dissipate his reserves."

The troops forming the general reserve, about 45,000 fighting men with 124 guns, if the 4th, 2nd, and 12th Divisions, and Umezawa's group may be so designated, were not placed centrally, since owing to the frontage on

* This force was so placed that it could both guard the communications of the First Army, and menace those of the whole Russian Army. The Russians would, therefore, be obliged to spread out their troops so as to face those of the Umezawa Brigade.

Map N° 7.

F VIEW

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Scale

To face Page 42.

which the armies were standing, some twenty miles excluding the Umezawa Brigade, and to lack of metalled roads and well-developed lateral communications, they could not then have intervened effectively in the battle. But they were posted in "predetermined" areas, where their services would readily be available "to meet any eventuality and exploit success to the full." The 4th Division being in the locality where a blow against the somewhat exposed line of communication to Ying-kow could best be parried; the others so situated that they could either make an enveloping attack across the Tai-tzu, and thus threaten the line of retreat of the Russian troops, who were to the south of the river; or, should the Russians retire, as they had done so many times before, pass over the Tai-tzu and try to stop them. (Map VIII.)

"Be bold, be bold, and everywhere be bold," is good counsel to those who can draw the line accurately between acts that are bold, and those that are merely foolhardy and rash. Also, as has been pointed out, it is easy to be bold when no great issues depend on the accuracy of the judgment and on the wisdom of what is to be done. Nevertheless, military history cannot be studied with advantage unless an attempt is made both to see the situation as it appeared to those who were in positions of responsibility, and to endeavour to better their plans.

It is a commonplace that to attack is often the best defence, for the enemy are then obliged to guard themselves and are not given the opportunity of delivering blows; and it is laid down in the Field Service Regulations that "the greatest possible strength should be deployed for the decisive attack." This also was perhaps the best, possibly even the only, chance held by the Japanese of gaining a decisive victory before the Russians became so strong in numbers that to achieve such a success would not be practicable. It may, therefore, be asked whether the Japanese would not have been better advised to have reserved three divisions for the attack against the communications of the Russians, rather than weaken the force and value of such a stroke by keeping a division in hand to meet an attack against their own

communications, which might never be delivered? The answer to this question depends, primarily, on the estimate that had been formed by the Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese armies of the personality of General Kuropatkin and the quality of his troops; and then on what is known as character, "the completely fashioned will." But, in the strategical situation as then existing, the adoption of a plan of this kind would have been advantageous, unless there were good reason to suppose that Kuropatkin would assume the offensive, and that the Russians would make an attack against the left flank of the Japanese armies in anticipation of, and with the object of preventing, an advance round that of the Russian forces. For, if the Japanese could be the first to deliver an effective blow against the communications of the Russians, it was probable that the instinct of self-preservation would prompt the latter to subordinate their movements to those of the Japanese.

If the attacks that were made by the Japanese on August 30th were delivered with the intention of "forcing the enemy to dissipate his reserves," they were certainly vigorous enough for this purpose. The infantry, however, were checked at all points. The Guards, whose offensive was not commenced until much later than that of the troops on their left, were definitely repulsed, the regiments of the Fourth Army could gain no ground, neither could those on the right of the Second Army; and, owing to the impossibility of moving except very slowly over the sodden plain, an enveloping advance by the 6th Division did not reach the enemy's lines until the 3rd and 5th Divisions had been brought to a standstill. This attack also was unsuccessful, which once more proves how necessary it is that the higher commanders should exercise a general control in battle "by allotting tasks to formations, and by co-ordinating the detailed plans of their commanders."

The troops of the 4th Division were not engaged, being apparently held in readiness to meet a counter-attack against the left of the Second Army.

Meanwhile a momentous decision had been made by General Kuroki.

It seems that by noon the weather had cleared sufficiently to enable an observing post that had been placed by the Guards on commanding ground about twelve miles from Liao-Yang, to report that the enemy's captive balloon had been hauled down, that trains were frequently moving northwards from Liao-Yang, and that there were four big fires in the city.

It will be remembered that, on August 28th, Kuroki was warned that the men of the First Army were to be ready to cross over the Tai-tzu, and that, up to this time, the Russians had fought delaying, not decisive, actions in the main. The information furnished by the Guards seemed, therefore, to indicate that the enemy were again preparing to retreat ; and, with the object of cutting off as many Russians as possible, Kuroki issued orders at 1 p.m. that the 2nd and 12th Divisions were to cross over the Tai-tzu during the night, and that Umezawa's Group was to do so at Pen-hsi-hu on August 31st. The Guards were to cover the movements of the other divisions and were to co-operate with the troops of the Fourth Army. Subsequently, however, reports as to the course of the battle caused Kuroki to detail the 3rd Brigade (six battalions) of the 2nd Division and three batteries to remain in support of the Guards.

Communication by telephone, field telegraph, or orderly, was generally maintained between the various headquarters in the Japanese forces, and there is no reason to suppose that a report as to the decision which had been made by General Kuroki was not received at General Headquarters. Since the orders that were given to the First Army were neither suspended nor reversed, ~~Marshal Oyama~~ must receive the credit, or bear the blame, for what was now undertaken.

If, as apparently was the case, the Japanese really believed that the Russians were again about to retire, it was certainly judicious to prepare to press them hard and to send troops over the Tai-tzu for this purpose.

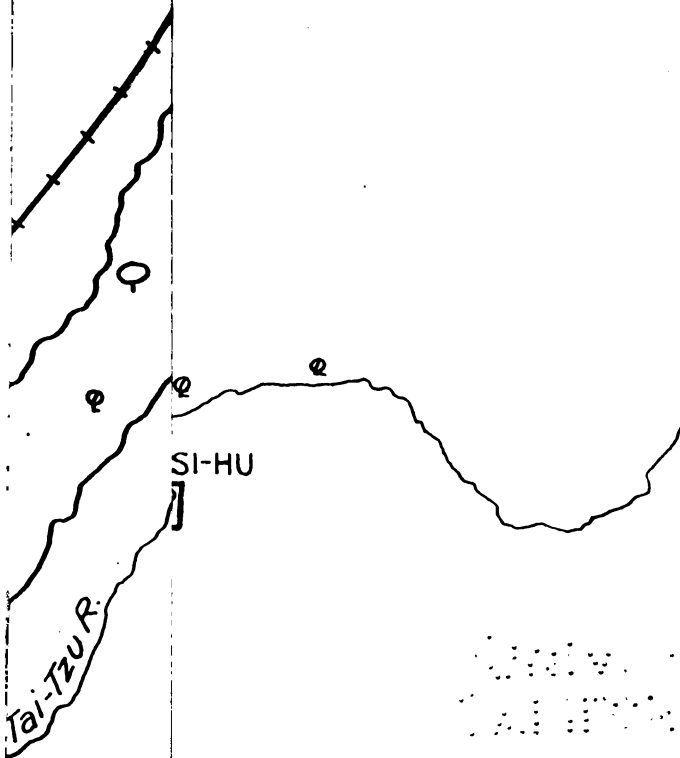
But would not this have been the wisest plan in the actual circumstances as they are now known ?

The situation was as follows : The Russians had repulsed the attacks of the best troops in the Japanese

armies, and had inflicted severe losses on them. It was, apparently, still thought that a counter-attack might be made against the left of the Second Army, and the 4th Division had been kept in hand to meet it, the only other reserves being the 2nd and 12th Divisions, which were fifteen or twenty miles away, and Umezawa's small group which was still more distant.

The Japanese could certainly not now have fallen back for the purpose of manœuvring for a more favourable opportunity to attack, because such an opportunity would, in all probability, never occur. The armies, also, must either again separate as they retired, or the First Army must abandon its menacing position as regards the communications of the Russians, and perhaps its line of communication to the Ya-lu ; and, as has been pointed out, it is by no means certain that, at this period, the three armies could have been supplied with food and munitions from Ying-kow, and Ta-lien-wan. Further, to have drawn back after being repulsed, and after the reverse that had been experienced at Port Arthur, would have depressed the Japanese soldiers, the reaction would have been strong in men who were accustomed to easy victory, and encouraged those of the Russians ; and when this is the case a retreat sometimes degenerates into a rout. Again, such a confession of failure would have entailed serious political and financial consequences, Japanese credit would have been lowered, and difficulty would have been experienced in floating the foreign loans that were essential for the prosecution of the war.

Had the Japanese ceased to prosecute their attacks, and entrenched the ground that had been gained, as they did subsequently at the Battle of the Sha-ho (the river which is about half-way between Liao-Yang and Mukden), their situation would have been almost as unfavourable. Such action would have been an acknowledgment that they had failed in the first real test of strength, even if the counter-attacks which the Russians would probably make were repulsed ; and victory could then only be gained with the help of large reinforcements. These could have been obtained by moving to the front the 7th and 8th Divisions, and the



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Kobi Brigades that were still in Japan ; and, after turning the siege of Port Arthur into an investment, transferring one or more divisions from the Third Army to the northern front. But it was to be expected that the Russians would, meanwhile, receive an equally great accession of numbers, and, so far as *moral* was in question, the position of the Japanese would necessarily be less favourable when fighting was renewed.

On the other hand, the best, if not the only, way of both winning the battle, and disconcerting any plans that might have been made by the enemy, was to go on. And, if this is admitted, as in cold blood, and when judgment is not vitiated by the sense of responsibility, nor unbalanced by fatigue and excitement, it probably will be admitted, the problem was the direction in which the next attack could best be made : whether against the strong positions, where the troops had already failed, or against the enemy's communications, where "success would destroy his moral." Logically, the second was by far the most favourable alternative, for the Japanese would reap greater rewards if victorious. But, if defeated, the result might be immediately and altogether disastrous.

It is easy, then, now to say that this was a moment not for caution and self-restraint, nor for retreat nor entrenchment, but for deliberate daring. Yet it is only when a well-balanced and a well-trained mind is controlled by a strong will that such decisions can be made in a crisis ; and they can only be taken by a soldier who has confidence in himself and in his men ; and who, having read the character of his opponent, and formed an accurate opinion in regard to the value of the troops of the enemy's army, is prepared to take liberties, to play upon their weak points and their fears.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DIRECT AND ENVELOPING ATTACKS BY THE JAPANESE ARMIES, AND THE PURSUIT OF THE RUSSIANS

It has already been stated that the Japanese were apparently under the impression, on August 30th, that the Russians were retiring or about to retire. Patrols, therefore, crossed the Tai-tzu in the evening, and under their protection, but without further precautions, the men of the 12th Division and 15th Brigade of the 2nd Division marched to the bank of the river, smoking and talking being carried on as would have been done in a route-march. Apparently, the level of the water had now fallen considerably, for at midnight the infantry of the 2nd Division waded over a ford at Lien-tao-wan, where the stream is 200 yards in width ; but the depth was still three feet, and the current was so strong that four men with linked arms could barely hold their own against it.

Fortunately, little or no resistance was encountered. With the help of guns placed on the left bank of the stream, which engaged those of a Russian force that was on high ground to the north of it, the infantry of the 2nd Division and 15th Brigade were, therefore, able to occupy by 3 p.m. on August 31st, Swallow Hill and the ground between it and Manju Yama ; and patrols were busily moving through the dense, waving masses of kao-liang to reconnoitre the enemy's position on Manju Yama, and the area round this knoll. (Map IX.)

A pontoon bridge, which was about 170 yards long, was begun near Swallow Hill at 1 p.m. by the engineers of the Guard and 2nd Divisions, and was finished at 5 p.m. ; and a second bridge was made on September 1st a short distance lower down the river. Covered by the fire of the rest of the guns some batteries were then moved over the Tai-tzu, but no fighting of any importance took place

during the remainder of the day in this area ; although to " maintain the continuity of the attack with as few breaks as possible, must be the aim both of commanders and of subordinate leaders in the front line " ; especially, it may be supposed, when the enemy's troops are believed to be retreating. On the other hand, caution was, no doubt, imposed on the infantry of the 12th Division and 15th Brigade by the puzzling conditions in which they found themselves, and by the fact that the Russians, even if they showed no enterprise, were strongly holding their positions on Manju Yama, and the higher hills beyond it.

On the southern bank of the Tai-tzu also, the Guard and 10th Divisions merely cannonaded the enemy's positions. Whereas, it was evidently their business to " combine with the enveloping attack " by holding the Russians to their trenches. It is said that this slackness was caused by the absence of arrangements on the part of the commanders of the First and Fourth Armies for close co-operation by these divisions. Well aware that General Nodzu was a keen and resolute fighter, General Kuroki left orders that the Guards were to conform with the movements of the 10th Division ; and he then rode away to supervise the building of the bridge near Swallow Hill, and the operations of the 12th Division and 15th Brigade. General Nodzu, on the other hand, felt confident that the Guards would make a strong attack for the purpose of covering the passage of the other troops over the Tai-tzu by diverting the attention of the X Corps away from this operation. And he consequently gave instructions that the men of the 10th Division were to co-operate with those of the Guard ; and having done so rode westwards to watch the furious attempts that were being made by the 3rd and 5th Divisions to capture the Shou-shan-pu heights.

An unsuccessful assault, which was delivered at or before dawn, had meanwhile been undertaken against the troops on the Russian right by the 6th and 3rd Divisions, and one regiment (three battalions) of the 5th Division. When this had failed* the fire of about

* The 1st Battalion 34th Regiment, 3rd Division, lost 586 officers and men, and the Regiment, 1,119.

300 guns (234 field guns and 68 so-called "heavy" guns) was directed, in preparation for another attack, on a frontage of some two miles opposite to which were the 3rd and 5th Divisions. (Map IX.) It seems that although the supply of ammunition for the Second and Fourth Armies did not fail during the battle, sufficient was not available to enable rapid fire to be continued for any length of time. The guns, therefore, had only fired quickly for about one hour, when 10,000 infantry went forward at about noon so as to envelop, from the south and south-east, the flank of the Shou-shan-pu position that overlooked the Ta-ssu Valley.

The men of the 3rd Division, who were prominent in this attack, were held to be the best fighters in the Japanese Army, and the reputation of those of the 5th Division was also justly high. The resistance of the Russians was however so bitter that at 4 p.m., when the efforts of the Japanese were relaxed, only one of the lower trenches on the eastern side of the position had been taken. The second assault, therefore, had not been crowned with success.

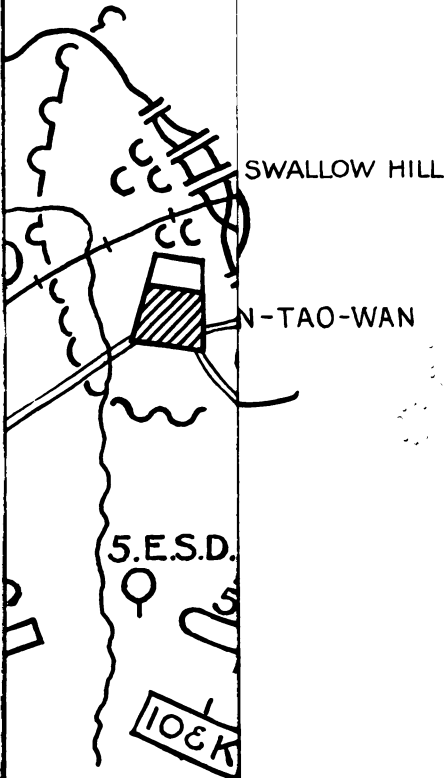
Marshal Oyama was now in one of those difficult situations that so frequently confront leaders in the field; for the full effect of the bold turning movement across the Tai-tzu had apparently not been felt by the Russians, and it was therefore not improbable that a counter-attack would be made against the troops of his left wing, who had twice been repulsed. It is not difficult now to perceive that the best way of preventing such a counter-stroke was again to attack, since the enemy's leaders might then be deceived as to the condition of the Japanese troops, and might still either hold their reserves in hand for the purpose of preventing a break-through, or use them in merely strengthening the line. Also the operations of Kuroki's Army would be facilitated if the Russians could be held to their positions on the southern bank of the Tai-tzu.

Homage must, nevertheless, be paid both to the commander who could resolve to deliver another attack, and to hardly-trying troops who were able to respond to his wishes. And Oyama made a fine decision when, at

Map. N° 9.

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5 p.m., he called on the men for yet a third effort, and placed the 4th Division at the disposal of General Oku. What, in actual fact, was quite an insignificant advance on the part of some of the Russian cavalry that were in the area to the west of Liao-Yang, then caused so much anxiety lest it should prove to be the first movement of a great counter-attack, that the 4th Division was again kept out of the fight. And, after panting forward through the heavy mud, these disappointed men were sent back to the area from which they had started.

A heavy thunderstorm for a time prevented the infantry from making the attack, although gun-fire did not slacken while the rain continued. At midnight engineers crept slowly forward for the purpose of cutting any wire that might still be standing on the front to be assaulted, as wire, although placed at some distance from the trenches, had previously delayed the troops. When the infantry advanced an hour later it was plain that the enemy's steadfast resistance had at last weakened, and that they were leaving the position; but it was 3 a.m. on September 1st before the Russians left them and the hills were fully won.

The news of this welcome success spread quickly, and the Japanese soon ascertained that the Russians had abandoned the whole of the "advanced" position.

Before a decision could be made as to what could now best be done, Marshal Oyama needed information—information as to the state and dispositions of his own troops, and news whether the Russians were still holding ground on the southern bank of the Tai-tzu.

It is, however, pointed out in the Field Service Regulations that "a commander will seldom be able to wait for full information as to the enemy's dispositions"; because such accurate news is rarely, if ever, available even after the event, and to wait for it would be to let irreparable moments slip away. When preparing his mind to make decisions, a leader, therefore, must consider probabilities, and should give his enemy the credit for doing, or having done, what is reasonable.

It was possible that one of three principal motives had caused General Kuropatkin to withdraw his troops

from the "advanced" position. The Russians might, for instance, have fallen back in order to concentrate a large force with which to attack the left of the Japanese Army. But this was unlikely because there was not enough space in which either to manœuvre a number of troops within the "main" position, or to deploy from it.

It was more probable, then, that the enemy were either definitely retreating, or were marching northwards in order to attack the Japanese forces that had already crossed the Tai-tzu.

If the Russians were abandoning the southern bank of the river and massing a force for an offensive against the 12th Division and 15th Brigade, the best and most effective way of helping them, and of maintaining "the continuity of the attack" was to send to their direct assistance as many troops as could be fed and supplied with ammunition. At the same time the power of the blow against the enemy's vital point would be increased by such a movement. If, however, a Russian group had been left in the "main" position, the Japanese must direct a sufficient number of troops against it to prevent enterprises against their own communications. But, although this would evidently be most important, it would still be vital to strike as hard a blow as possible in the area to the north of the river against the enemy's flank and communications, and in doing so indirectly, but most effectively, secure their own.

As is pointed out in the Field Service Regulations, "the greatest possible strength should be deployed in the decisive attack."

If the Russians were retreating, the policy of reinforcing the First Army, and so concentrating strength on the northern bank of the Tai-tzu, would be the best, unless there were good grounds for believing that the enemy were so much demoralized that they would not be capable of destroying or removing the bridges near Liao-Yang.

It may be concluded, therefore, that the Japanese should, subject to the condition of their troops, have been prepared to send the remainder of the First Army and the whole of the Fourth Army, or even a larger force if its

maintenance could be assured, over the Tai-tzu at Swallow Hill and against the enemy's left flank.

It seems that Oyama did not obtain until about 9 a.m. certain information that the Russians were holding the "main" position in strength. Meanwhile a warning had been issued, apparently at a much earlier hour, that the divisions of the First Army were not to be committed to a definite course of action until the situation was more clear.

As regards the condition of the Japanese troops, it may be presumed that, by 9 a.m., Oyama was aware that the men of the 3rd and 6th Divisions were worn out, and the divisions much disorganized, and that the infantry of the 4th Division were also exhausted with marching and counter-marching. The 10th Division, 10th Kobi Brigade, Guard Division, Guard Kobi Regiment (two battalions), and 3rd Infantry Brigade were fresh, or fairly fresh, and the 5th Division had not been so severely tried as the 3rd Division. At least two effective divisions would be needed to hold the Russian garrison of the "main" position, and guard the communications of the Japanese armies. It seems, then, that whatever may in principle have been the best policy, in hard, actual fact only the troops of the First Army were immediately available for the prosecution of the offensive on the northern bank of the Tai-tzu.

During the morning of September 1st the 10th and 5th Divisions, with the support of the "heavy" artillery, advanced towards the "main" position, and engaged the Russians. The 4th Division and 1st Cavalry Brigade did not move forward until the afternoon; and the 3rd and 6th Divisions spent the day in reorganizing their units and resting the men.

General Kuroki had crossed the Tai-tzu at 4 a.m. on September 1st and established his headquarters at Swallow Hill; and here, at 9 a.m., he received the news that the Russians had retired as far as Liao-Yang. It appears that this information, combined with the fact that movements northwards along the railway and Mandarin road could be seen from Swallow Hill, and that attacks had not been made against the 12th Division

and 15th Brigade, confirmed Kuroki's previous impression that the enemy were in full retreat ; and although we now know that this was not the case, it could, at the time, and in view of what had almost invariably occurred earlier in the campaign, plausibly be argued that the troops at Liao-Yang were merely rear-guards, who were covering the removal of the bridges. At any rate, in spite of Oyama's warning, General Kuroki resolved to push his troops forward as quickly as possible. The units of the 15th Brigade, therefore, were sent during the morning through the kao-liang against the force that was holding Manju Yama, so as both to gain the space required to enable troops to manœuvre freely after crossing over the bridges, and if possible also open the passage of the Tai-tzu for the Guards. The 12th Division, which had already gone forward at 7 a.m., was told to move north-westwards through the fields of millet and along the low col that connects Swallow Hill and Manju Yama with the higher hills at and to the south of the Yen-tai mines. At the same time directions were given that the Guards were to proceed to a point on the southern bank of the Tai-tzu, near its junction with the Tang, where boats could be seen lying against the other bank, and force the passage of the stream. The 3rd Brigade and Guard Kobi Regiment were also kept on the southern side of the Tai-tzu, and it was probably intended that they should follow the Guards.

Kuroki's troops were soon brought to a full stop. The advance of the 12th Division was suspended after the hills lying three miles to the north of Manju Yama, had been occupied, because it was noticed that a long column of Russians was moving on the high ground near Yen-tai station. The 15th Brigade was only able to close on the troops that were holding Manju Yama, and the Guards found that large bodies of the enemy were occupying entrenchments on steep slopes that commanded the locality where the passage over the river was to have been made.

As he was without reserves on the northern bank of the Tai-tzu, Kuroki, at 1 p.m., ordered the 3rd Brigade, the Guard Kobi Regiment, and three batteries to cross the

river. At about the same time instructions were issued that Umezawa's Group (5,000 fighting men with 16 guns) was to press on from Pen-hsi-hu towards the Yen-tai mines, so as to prolong and secure the right of the 12th Division.*

It seems that, by nightfall on September 1st, Marshal Oyama had come to the conclusion that the bulk of the Russians had crossed the Tai-tzu, and that only a part of their army was holding the "main" position round Liao-Yang. No change, however, was made in the general disposition of the Japanese forces. It may be that the Commander-in-Chief hoped that the "main" position would quickly be captured, and that the troops would then be able rapidly to pass over the Tai-tzu. Or, since an attack had not been made against the 2nd and 12th Divisions, he may have leant towards the opinion that the enemy were in full retreat ; but that such troops as could be spared from the Second and Fourth Armies were not physically in a condition to march round by Swallow Hill after them. Perhaps the administrative services were not able to undertake to maintain a larger force than the troops of the First Army on the northern bank of the Tai-tzu, until food and munitions could be moved across the river at Liao-Yang. Or, again, it may have been thought that the moment had already passed for sending reinforcements to the First Army, and that these could not arrive in time effectively to assist it in pursuing the enemy.

Although, as has been stated, the Japanese seem to have believed that the main body of the Russian Army was on the northern bank of the Tai-tzu, the men of the Second and Fourth Armies displayed, perhaps, were obliged by the formidable nature of the "main" position and the vigour of the enemy's fire to display, great caution throughout most of the hours of daylight on September 2nd. These, therefore, were passed in constructing, under cover of a strong bombardment, lines of trenches,

* Under these dispositions there would be on the northern bank of the Tai-tzu about 30,000 fighting men with 76 guns, of whom 25,000 (with 60 guns) were between Swallow Hill and the Yen-tai mines, whereas there were in this area as many as 85,000 Russian troops, with about 400 guns ; and 70,000 Russians with 352 guns, were about to attack the Japanese.

where the millet ended, within about 400 yards of the Russian works ; and when they had been dug, the infantry that were to make attacks by night were dribbled into them. The Russians did not attempt to stop this concentration, except by fire, until suddenly they sent a force against the left of the Japanese line. And the sortie led to such sharp fighting that a reinforcement of four Kobi battalions was sent to this flank.

During the evening and night no fewer than four strong attacks were made at intervals of about two hours by the infantry of the Second and Fourth Armies, but none attained any success. (Map X.)

The troops of the First Army met with better luck, for the 15th Brigade captured Manju Yama during the night of September 1st and 2nd. When naturally exhilarated by this achievement, General Kuroki was informed on the morning of the 2nd that it was hoped that the Second and Fourth Armies would reach the Tai-tzu during the day. Since, in spite of reports as to the movement of Russian columns, the 12th Division had not been attacked, while Umezawa was making good progress, Kuroki, and not unnaturally, seems to have reverted to his former opinion that the Russians were in full retreat, and that his troops were only being opposed by strong rear-guards. In these circumstances he thought that it was his obvious duty to try and throw troops across the enemy's communications, so as at least to cut off the formations that were opposing the Second and Fourth Armies ; and orders, in consequence, were issued that the Guards were to cross the Tai-tzu, and that the remainder were to advance for six or seven miles westwards and pursue the Russians, Umezawa's group moving towards the Yen-tai mines.

The Guards, however, were still confronted by a strong force of the enemy, and as it was impossible for them to pass over the river under such conditions, the day was spent in exchanging gun-fire with the Russians.

On the other flank the 12th Division when moving cautiously through the kao-liang, fell in with and easily defeated a large force of Russians. But the arrival soon

afterwards of two strong columns of other Russian troops, caused the commander of the division to suspend its advance.

The main body of the 2nd Division delivered an attack in the morning on the enemy's positions on the high hills lying to the west of Manju Yama, but this was checked. The enemy then made a counter-attack at about noon, which was repulsed, but they subsequently brought so many guns into action that the Japanese, who could not make an adequate reply both owing to the smaller number and lower power of their guns, and to shortage of ammunition, were thrown on the defensive; and Manju Yama was actually lost after nightfall, but was subsequently abandoned by the Russians and reoccupied by the Japanese. At this juncture General Kuroki had in hand only five battalions of the 3rd Brigade and two battalions of the Guard Kobi Regiment. *Redeemed*

Communication by telephone between the headquarters of General Kuroki and General Headquarters was interrupted on the evening of September 2nd, and was not restored for about twenty-four hours. Apparently, neither orderlies nor despatch riders were used for the carriage of correspondence between the two headquarters, and Kuroki, in consequence, was obliged to base his decisions on the information which had been sent to him early on the 2nd, that it was hoped that the Second and Fourth Armies would reach the Tai-tzu by the evening of that day. Whatever may have been General Kuroki's intentions, the men of the 15th Brigade were too much exhausted for any further effort on September 3rd; those of the 12th Division were either tired out also, or it was considered impolitic to send them against the masses of Russians that seemed to be in the kao-liang and on the hills between the Yen-tai mines and station; and the commander of the First Army did not, apparently, now care to expend his reserves until news had been obtained of the operations of the other armies. The Guards again could not venture to attempt the passage of the river at the mouth of the Tang in face of numbers of Russians, who were strongly posted there. In the evening six battalions of the Guards were, therefore,

brought to the northern bank over the bridges that had been made near Swallow Hill.

Farther to the west, caution was also necessary, as the infantry of the Second and Fourth Armies had been subjected to a long and harsh strain. The entrenchments of the "main" position were consequently bombarded throughout the day of the 3rd. At 6 p.m. the stubborn infantry renewed their brave attempts to break through, but no success was gained until after midnight, when the Russians evacuated the fortifications. The city of Liao-Yang was then occupied by the troops of the Fourth Army, and the men of the 4th and 6th Divisions of the Second Army tried in vain to find some means of crossing the broad Tai-tzu; but could not do so for the enemy had destroyed or removed their floating bridges and all boats, and the wooden roadway of the iron railway bridge was in flames.

A dense mist covered the battlefield until 11 a.m. on September 4th, and it was only then reported by the men of the First Army that the Russians were apparently withdrawing their troops. But Kuroki had so often been mistaken in his forecast of the movements of the enemy, that, when the fog rolled away, the most careful measures were taken definitely to ascertain them. It was, in consequence, not until 2.30 p.m. that General Kuroki felt that he could confidently state that the Russians were in reality retreating. In the meantime it had been ascertained that the men of the 15th Brigade were incapable even of pursuit. And as to pursue through the kao-liang would be hazardous, the 12th Division and Umezawa's Group, which had come up from Pen-hsi-hu, made their way cautiously along the railway line, which runs from Yen-tai station to the mines, and the hills that lie near its track. And near this line the leading units of the 12th Division, which were advancing in close formation, were attacked, after nightfall, by a dense column of the I Siberian Corps. A brief, but very fierce, hand-to-hand fight ensued between these brave troops, and when the Russians had drawn off it was found that the Japanese had lost 550 men, nearly half of the total casualties that were suffered by the 12th Division in the battle.

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After this experience, and also because heavy rain had turned the unmetalled tracks into ditches that were knee-deep in mud, the 12th and 2nd Divisions and Umezawa's group wisely displayed even greater circumspection on September 5th, and contented themselves with occupying the line of the Yen-tai railway. As the Guards were still far behind these troops, and only part of the Fourth Army had crossed the Tai-tzu, and no more than two battalions of the Second Army, Marshal Oyama in the evening gave orders that the pursuit was to cease, and decided that he must be content with the half-success of having manœuvred the Russians out of a very strong position.

The casualties of the Japanese were greater than those of the army that they had beaten, and amounted to : 5,500 killed, and 18,000 wounded, or about twenty per cent. of the men that had been fighting. The losses among the troops of the First Army were 6,200 out of 46,000 ; in the Second Army 10,500 out of 46,500, excluding the cavalry ; and 6,700 in the Fourth Army out of 31,000. But of the 1,500 men of the Cavalry Brigade only 19 became casualties.

* * * *

The errors that are committed by commanders under the stress of battle are always open, going before to judgment ; and this perhaps is why such epithets as fumbling are applied to their actions. But mistakes may be very evident after the event, and yet most difficult to avoid at the critical moment, as everyone is painfully aware even in a game.

Now that the actions of the two sides that fought in this battle have been set forth in outline, it is not difficult to point out that General Kuropatkin's failure was largely due to the disastrous over-estimate of 40,000 fighting men which was made by his staff of the strength of the Japanese Army. This estimate, combined with his knowledge that a number of the Russian formations were not efficient, seems to have produced in General Kuropatkin's mind an excessive respect for his enemies. As has been explained, it was nevertheless necessary to

fight a battle, but the Russian Commander-in-Chief could not bring himself to decide definitely in regard to the tactics that should be adopted. Apparently, he halted, then, between two opinions, and was obliged in the end to undertake a complicated manoeuvre, under very difficult conditions, of which his troops were not capable.

It must be admitted that fortune favoured the Japanese, but this was due to the fact that, seemingly by chance, they struck a telling blow in the right direction. The errors of the Japanese were not fewer than those of the Russians, but this lucky thrust, their fine tenacity of purpose, and the power of fighting hard without which victory cannot be attained, more than outweighed the effect of all the mistakes.*

* In the Appendix are questions on the application of the principles that are stated in Field Service Regulations, Vol. II, to the problems that arose during this battle.

APPENDIX.

QUESTIONS ON THE APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES THAT ARE STATED IN FIELD SERVICE REGULATIONS, VOL. II

“Success in war depends more on moral than on physical qualities” [F.S.R., II, Sec. 1 (2)]. Explain briefly how the truth of this statement is illustrated by the course of the Battle of Liao-Yang.

“The principles of war are as follows :—i. Maintenance of the objective” [F.S.R., II, Sec. 2 (1)]. Is the importance of this principle shown by what took place during the Battle of Liao-Yang?

“Victory can be won only as a result of offensive action” [F.S.R., II, Sec. 2 (2) (ii)]. Do any of the events that occurred during the Battle of Liao-Yang lend support to this statement? If so, give a brief account of these incidents.

It is stated in the Field Service Regulations [Vol. II, Sec. 2 (2) (iv)] that “Concentration of superior force, moral and material, at the decisive time and place, and its resolute employment in the battle are essential for the achievement of success.” Is this endorsed by the course of the Battle of Liao-Yang?

“To economize strength while compelling a dissipation of that of the enemy must be the constant aim of every commander” [F.S.R., II, Sec. 2 (2) (v)]. Describe any measures for the attainment of this purpose that were taken immediately before or during the Battle of Liao-Yang.

“Only by effective co-operation can the component parts of any force develop fully their inherent power” [F.S.R., II, Sec. 2 (2) (viii)]. Is the truth of this statement illustrated by any events that occurred during the Battle of Liao-Yang?

“ War is a contest between the will of the opposing commanders ” [F.S.R., II, Sec. 10 (1)]. Discuss this statement with reference to what occurred during the Battle of Liao-Yang.

“ A commander must avoid interference with the initiative of his subordinates . . . ” [F.S.R., II, Sec. 10 (6)]. Discuss this maxim with reference to certain incidents that took place during the Battle of Liao-Yang.

“ Commanders of all ranks must be imbued with the doctrine that inaction and fear of responsibility are graver faults than errors in the choice of plan ” [F.S.R., II, Sec. 10 (8)]. Illustrate the advantages, and also the dangers, of this doctrine by quoting incidents which occurred during the Battle of Liao-Yang.

“ Prestige and moral effect are more than half the battle ” [F.S.R., II, Sec. 11 (3)]. Do events that occurred during the Battle of Liao-Yang support this statement ?

“ Battle is the decisive factor in war ” [F.S.R., II, Sec. 22 (1)]. If this is true, explain why an assault was made against the garrison of Port Arthur in August, 1904.

“ Nothing tends to upset the morale of subordinate commanders and troops more than a change of plan which may suggest vacillation on the part of the commander ” [F.S.R., II, Sec. 23 (2)]. Did any incident occur in August, 1904, that illustrates the truth of this statement ?

“ Time is an essential consideration in deciding whether an opportunity is favourable or not for immediate offensive action ” [F.S.R., II, Sec. 23 (3)]. Explain how this factor of time affected the policy that was adopted by :—

(a) General Kuropatkin,

(b) Marshal Oyama,

in August, 1904.

“ The defensive entails temporary loss of initiative ” [F.S.R., II, Sec. 24 (1)]. Is this statement illustrated by what happened during the Battle of Liao-Yang ?

“ A commander must possess high qualities of skill and resolution to be able to choose the right place and, more particularly, the right time for changing from a defensive to an offensive attitude ” [F.S.R., II, Sec. 24 (1)]. Give

instances in support of this statement from the events that took place during the Battle of Liao-Yang.

“ On the other hand, the offensive must not be assumed merely for its own sake ” [F.S.R., II, Sec. 24 (2)]. Discuss the statement with reference to the situation of the Japanese armies about August 22nd, 1904.

“ The necessity of maintaining strong reserves also assumes greater importance both with a view to meeting any eventuality and exploiting to the full the success gained by surprise as well as for the protection of the main forces against a counter-offensive or attempt to seize the initiative ” [F.S.R., II, Sec. 25 (1)]. Did General Kuropatkin and Marshal Oyama adhere to these principles when making their dispositions in the Battle of Liao-Yang ?

“ Detailed and timely information about the enemy . . . is a necessary factor of success in war ” [F.S.R., II, Sec. 33 (1)]. Is the truth of this statement exemplified by the experiences of the Russians before and during the Battle of Liao-Yang ?

By quoting incidents that occurred during the Battle of Liao-Yang, show that “ Good means of inter-communication are necessary for the successful direction of operations ” [F.S.R., II, Sec. 27 (4)].

Discuss the following statement with reference to the events of August 30th, 1904 : “ In any case, the commander who first comes to a decision as to his course of action and who gives effect to that decision without delay will have the best chance of effecting surprise and thus forcing the enemy to conform to his movements ” [F.S.R., II, Sec. 30 (1)].

Do you consider that the dispositions that were made by Marshal Oyama for the renewal of the battle on August 30th were or were not in accordance with the General Instructions that are given in Field Service Regulations, Vol. II, Sec. 30 (2) and (3) ?

State, in general terms, how the “ area behind the fighting line ” of the Japanese was “ organized ” [F.S.R., II, Sec. 32] as regards the supply of food and ammunition before and during the Battle of Liao-Yang.

"The security of a force is the first responsibility of its commander" [F.S.R., II, Sec. 43 (1)]. Discuss the manner in which General Kuropatkin applied this principle in the measures that were taken by him on and before August 29th, 1904.

Was the plan of action that was adopted by Marshal Oyama on August 22nd, 1904, a "good tactical plan" [F.S.R., II, Sec. 67 (1)], in your opinion?

Could the Japanese, do you think, have manoeuvred the Russians out of the positions that were occupied by them early in August, 1904? [F.S.R., II, Sec. 23 (3)].

The attack that was made by the armies of the Japanese on August 30th, 1904, may perhaps be called an "encounter attack" [F.S.R., II, Sec. 67 (2)]. Compare the dispositions that were made for this attack by the Japanese, with those that are contemplated in the instructions that are given in Field Service Regulations, Vol. II, Sections 69 and 70.

It is laid down in the Field Service Regulations that "The delivery of an attack against an enemy's flank destroys his morale, drives him away from his communications, and implies the outflanking of such resistance as he has had time to prepare" [F.S.R., II, Sec. 69 (3)]. State how it came about that the Japanese made an attack on August 31st, 1904, against the left flank of the Russian army.

It is explained in the Field Service Regulations that "it may be necessary for the enveloping troops to make a wide turning movement, and there is then the danger of a counterstroke by the enemy during the movement. . . . The attack aiming at penetration is generally easier and quicker to organize" [F.S.R., II, Sec. 69 (3) and (4)]. Discuss the question whether Marshal Oyama should preferably have continued on August 31st to prosecute the attack against the "advanced" Russian position.

"The greatest possible strength should be deployed for the decisive attack" [F.S.R., II, Sec. 69 (5)]. Did Marshal Oyama adhere to this principle when making dispositions for renewing the action on August 31st, 1904?

"Having seized the initiative by launching the attack, the commander must aim at retaining it" [F.S.R., II,

Sec. 70 (8)]. Did Marshal Oyama do this during the Battle of Liao-Yang ?

Explain why the Japanese did not, at the end of the Battle of Liao-Yang, continue to pursue the Russians until they were "crushed" [F.S.R., II, Sec. 87. (1)].

Do you think that it was either necessary, or desirable, for the army under General Kuropatkin to remain on the defensive during the first three weeks of August, 1904 ?

Discuss briefly the problem whether the Russian army should, or should not, have moved to the northern bank of the Tai-tzu early in August, 1904.

"The defender will be able to regain the initiative if he retains an adequate reserve under his own hand, keeps his own objective in view, and assumes the offensive when the favourable opportunity arrives. The difficulty of doing the latter is the chief objection to allowing the enemy to take the initiative" [F.S.R., II, Sec. 24 (3)]. Illustrate the last sentence by quoting the experiences of General Kuropatkin at the Battle of Liao-Yang.

It is stated in the Field Service Regulations that "the position selected must be strategically important" [F.S.R., II, Sec. 88 (3) (ii)]; "the extent of the position should not be too large for the number of troops available for its defence; the flanks should be naturally strong . . . [F.S.R., II, Sec. 89 (4)]; there should be ample room within and in rear of the position for manœuvring local and other reserves . . . [F.S.R., II, Sec. 89 (7)]; the ground in front of the position should be suitable for the assumption of the offensive . . . [F.S.R., II, Sec. 89 (11)]; the general reserve should usually be placed in the rear of that portion of the position which, from the general situation and the nature of the ground, offers the best line for an eventual counterstroke" [F.S.R., II, Sec. 92 (3)]. Explain briefly whether, and if so how far, the position that was taken up by the Russians on August 29th, 1904, and the manner in which the troops were disposed, fulfilled these conditions.

"When circumstances permit, temporary occupation of a covering position in advance of the main position may sometimes be advisable. Such positions tend to mislead the enemy . . . and may cause him to deploy

prematurely . . ." [F.S.R., II, Sec. 91 (4)]. If it may be considered that the positions that were occupied by the Russians up to August 27th, 1904, were "covering" positions, do you think that they gained any advantages by holding them?

"The enemy may commit mistakes, such as exposing a portion of his force without hope of support from the remainder, unduly extending his front, exposing his flanks, or posting his reserves in the wrong place" [F.S.R., II, Sec. 97 (5)]. Do you think that the decisions that were taken by General Kuropatkin on August 31st, 1904, were the best that could have been made in the circumstances, and having regard to what he knew of the strength and movements of the enemy?

"To initiate a counter-attack on a large scale without due time for preparation, co-ordination, and movement of troops is to court failure . . ." [F.S.R., II, Sec. 97 (4)]. Bearing in mind what is said in this paragraph, give your opinion in regard to the measures that were taken by General Kuropatkin on September 1st, 1904.

"Retirements may be carried out in order to evade an enemy's blow and to enable the force to fight again later under more favourable conditions, or they may be necessitated by the success of the enemy's attack" [F.S.R., II, Sec. 110 (1)]. Do you think that General Kuropatkin's decision that the Russian army must retreat during the night of September 3rd-4th was a right decision?

What effect, if any, was exercised by the weather on the operations of the armies that fought at Liao-Yang?

"An operation order must contain what the recipient requires to know, and nothing more" [F.S.R., II, Sec. 189 (4)]. Describe briefly how neglect of this principle adversely affected the operations of the Russians during the Battle of Liao-Yang.

Explain shortly how the organization of the Russian army differed from that of the armies of the Japanese. Under which system do you think that the authority of the Commander-in-Chief could best be exercised? and why would this result probably be obtained?

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